Eternal Values for A Changing Society

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

VOLUME
III

Education for Human Excellence

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ETERNAL VALUES
FOR
A CHANGING SOCIETY

VOLUME THREE

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A CHANGING SOCIETY

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By
SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST AND SECOND EDITIONS

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ADVAITA ASHRAMA, CALCUTTA

The Advaita Ashrama published in the past some of the lectures of Swami Ranganathananda. The present volume contains all of them and a few more speeches and writings, arranged in a logical order to enable the readers to grasp the central idea running through them all, which the name of the volume suggests. One of the main contributions by Swami Vivekananda to modern thought was to show that society can change in infinite ways in response to historical necessities; but that is no reason why the eternal values underlying all human endeavour should be discarded or even changed. Nay, he was emphatic that these alone can ensure stability at the same time that they supply the driving power for progress. In his conception, spirituality is a dynamic force expressing itself as an unfailing basis of continuous advancement towards the only human goal—God-realization—through varied activities on the social and other planes.

The book is an answer to many basic social, political, economic, and spiritual problems that beset the modern age; and we are sure that the readers will hail it as a timely publication.

Acknowledgement of the sources has been made at the proper places, and our thanks go to all who have permitted us to use these materials.

November 1958 PUBLISHERS

PREFACE TO THE ENLARGED ONE-VOLUME THIRD EDITION

We are happy to place before our readers in East and West this important book *Eternal Values for a Changing Society* by Swami Ranganathananda. The book comprises the speeches and writings of the Swami during the last thirty-six years in India and abroad.

A senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, which has its Headquarters at the Belur Math, District Howrah, West Bengal, Swami Ranganathananda is a member of its Board of Trustees and of the Governing Body of its closely allied institution, the Ramakrishna Mission. Born on 15 December, 1908, in a middle-class Hindu family in the sylvan village of Trikkur, Kerala State, the Swami bore the name of Śaṅkaran in his pre-monastic life. After completing his High School education in the neighbouring village of Ollur, during which the study of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature inspired him with the ideals of renunciation and service, young Śaṅkaran renounced the world and, receiving the blessings of Swami Shivananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and the second President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, at the hill station of Ootacamund *en route*, joined the Ramakrishna Order in its Mysore branch in July 1926, at the early age of seventeen and a half. And he spent the next twelve years—the first nine in the Mysore and the next three in the Bangalore, branches of the Order—under the loving training and care of Swami Siddheswarananda, the founder, later, of the Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna in Gretz, France. In 1929, he was initiated into *brahmacharya* by Swami Shivananda at the Belur Math and became a full-fledged probationer of the Order under the new name of Yati Chaitanya. And four years later, in January 1933, Swami Shivananda initiated him into *Sannyāsa* or monastic Order, and conferred on him the monastic name of Raṅganāthānanda. Absorbed as he was in a disciplined life of meditation, study, and monastery services, his Mysore experience provided the firm foundations for all his subsequent life and work in the holy Order.

During the last year of his stay in Mysore, he was the Warden of the ashrama's hostel for school and college students. While in Bangalore, he was closely associated with hundreds of students and teachers of the city and conducted moral and religious classes for the prisoners, including *satyāgraha* prisoners, of the Bangalore Central Jail. This was followed by three years in Rangoon as Secretary and Librarian of its Ramakrishna Mission Society, during which he undertook extensive lecture tours in Burma, and six years in Karachi—the then capital of the Indian province of Sind and now the main seaport city of West Pakistan—as the President of its Ramakrishna Math and Mission branch. At Rangoon and Karachi, he not only continued his close association with students and teachers as their friend and guide, but also exercised his beneficent influence over vast sections of the general public. His regular weekly study classes, held at the Rangoon and Karachi branches, on the Upaniṣads and the Gītā, and occasional lectures and discourses on other spiritual, philosophical, cultural, and educational themes, used to draw record crowds of men, women, and students belonging to diverse faiths and nationalities.

While in Karachi, apart from various philanthropic activities, the Swami also organized the raising of large funds from public donations and despatching over 1,250 tons of rice by special steamer to Calcutta to relieve the distress of the victims of the Bengal famine of 1943.

From 1949 to 1962, Swami Raṅganāthānanda was the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission branch in New Delhi. Here he built up a spacious public library and auditorium, a large university students' text-book library, and a magnificent temple dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna. In the humanitarian field, he organized bands of dedicated workers engaged in the fields of hospital social services and leprosy relief. His Sunday morning discourses at the Delhi University and his

Sunday evening discourses in the premises of the Ramakrishna Mission, which used to attract large audiences—the number at the Mission rising sometimes to over two thousand—became outstanding features of the cultural and intellectual life of India's capital city. During these years in Delhi, and later in Calcutta, the Swami undertook repeated lecture tours within India, addressing universities, colleges, schools, cultural institutions and administrative training academies and groups. At the request of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, he also undertook extensive lecture tours covering Japanese universities and several South-East Asian countries in 1958 and several times thereafter, and seventeen European countries, including Czechoslovakia, Poland, USSR, and Spain, between April and August 1961.

The Swami has given several broadcast talks at the invitation of the All India Radio. He addressed the annual Convocations of the Calcutta University in February 1966, on *India's Educational Vision*, and of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, in June 1967 on *The Indian Philosophy of Social Work*.

A collection of his speeches and writings under the title *Eternal Values for a Changing Society* was published in 1958 by the Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta-14; a second impression of the same was brought out two years later. With the kind permission of the Advaita Ashrama, we are now happy to bring out an enlarged edition of this book incorporating many of his important speeches and writings, which were not included in the earlier editions, and most of his speeches and writings subsequent to 1958.

This volume of the Swami's speeches and writings, bearing the significant title of *Eternal Values for a Changing Society*, can be taken, in view of its subject matter and treatment, as a companion volume to his book *The Message of the Upaniṣads*, published by us earlier and a revised second edition of which is also being published now along with this book.

May 1971 **PUBLISHERS**

PREFACE TO THE ENLARGED FOUR-VOLUME FOURTH EDITION

Swami Ranganathananda (1908), Senior Monk of the Ramakrishna Order, exemplifies the ideal of the *Guru* of the Indian tradition. The ideal teacher is best described by India's saint-philosopher, Ādi Śaṅkarācārya (788-820) in his *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi*. The teacher needs to be: *srotriyo, avṛjino, akāmahataḥ, brahmavittamaḥ, śāntaḥ, nirindhana ivānalaḥ* —'well-versed in the Vedas, free from sinfulness, not smitten by any desire (except the desire to serve others), Godward bent, calm like the flaming fire that has burnt itself out.'

Swamiji combines in himself great learning and innate humility—a mark of the aristocracy of the intellect.

Swamiji, with his gift of eloquence, enthralls people all over the world with his magnificent exposition of India's ageless culture backed by an erudition which, though firmly rooted in the Indian scriptures, gives due place to the role of science and technology in human affairs. He beckons to the past only to illumine the present; he holds up the spiritual goals of the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads* but does not decry the material benefits of modern science and technology. He advocates a synthesis of spirituality and science, as the celebrated scientist Dr. Albert Einstein also had averred: 'Science without religion is blind, and religion without science is lame.'

Swamiji's exposition of Indian spiritual and social values is as much derived from intensive study of books, ancient and modern, as from his own authentic experience as a *Sannyāsin.* His joining the Ramakrishna Order at the early age of seventeen-and-a-half was a response to the Call Divine in the form of a dream at the age of nine or ten.

Swamiji's spiritual ministrations are avidly sought after by people all over the world, by the rich and the poor, the sophisticated and the simple-minded, both in urban and rural areas.

True to Swami Vivekananda's dictum, 'Religion is not for empty bellies,' Swami Ranganathananda is always in the forefront to organize help to the famine and flood relief services of the Ramakrishna order and other voluntary agencies with great vision and quiet efficiency.

An Apostle of God who upholds the view that 'service to man is worship of God,' Swamiji has given a commendable lead in extending medical aid, particularly to leprosy patients and to the rural population.

His book, *Eternal Values For a Changing Society*, now being brought out in four volumes, is the fourth edition of the single-volume original, revised and enlarged by Swamiji. The volumes contain Swamiji's speeches and writings covering a wide spectrum—culture, religion, science, philosophy, education, administration, management, and biography.

The low pricing of the publication has been made possible by generous contributions, through Swami Ranganathananda, from lovers and admirers of Vedānta in the West and the East, particularly from Europe, U.S.A., and Australia. We are beholden to them all.

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March 1, 1986

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

In the book, Devanāgarī or Sanskrit characters are transliterated according to the scheme adopted by the International Congress of Orientalists at Athens in 1912 and since then generally acknowledged to be the only rational and satisfactory one. In it, the inconsistency, irregularity, and redundancy of English spelling are ruled out: f, q, w, x, and z are not called to use; one fixed value is given to each letter. According to this scheme :

a	stands for	अ	and sounds like	*o*	in	come
ā	,, ,,	आ	,, ,, ,,	*a*	,,	f*a*r
i	,, ,,	इ	,, ,, ,,	*ĭ*	,,	b*i*t
ī	,, ,,	ई	,, ,, ,,	*ee*	,,	feel
u	,, ,,	उ	,, ,, ,,	*u*	,,	full
ū	,, ,,	ऊ	,, ,, ,,	*oo*	,,	cool
ṛ	,, ,,	ऋ	,, may be pronounced like *ri* in *ri*ng			
e	,, ,,	ए	,, sounds like	*a*	in	c*a*ke
ai	,, ,,	ऐ	,, ,, ,,	*i*	,,	m*i*te
o	,, ,,	ओ	,, ,, ,,	*o*	,,	note
au	,, ,,	औ	,, ,, ,,	*ou*	,,	c*ou*nt
ṁ	,, ,,		(*anusvāra*) and sounds like *m* in so*m*e			
ḥ	,, ,,	(*visarga*)	,, ,,	soft half *h*		
'	(apostrophe) stands for	*ऽ* (elided a (अ))				
k	stands for	क्	and sounds like	*k*		
kh	,, ,,	ख्	,, ,, ,,	*kh*	in	sil*k h*at (uttered quiekly together)
g	,, ,,	ग्	,, ,, ,,	*g*	,,	go
gh	,, ,,	घ्	,, ,, ,,	*gh*	,,	log-*h*ut

n	stands for	ङ्	,, ,, ,,	*ng*	,,	si*ng*
c	,, ,,	च्	,, ,, ,,	*ch*	,,	chur*ch*
ch	,, ,,	छ्	,, ,, ,,	*chh*	,,	chur*ch*-*h*ill
ja	,, ,,	ज्	,, ,, ,,	*j*	,,	*j*ug
jh	,, ,,	झ्	,, ,, ,,	*dgeh*	,,	he*dgeh*og
ñ	,, ,,	ञ्	,, ,, ,,	*n*	,,	si*n*ge (burn) (a palatal n)
ṭ	,, ,,	ट्	and sounds like	*t*	in	cur*t*
ṭh	,, ,,	ठ्	,, ,, ,,	*th*	,,	ho*t*-*h*ouse
ḍ	,, ,,	ड्	,, ,, ,,	*d*	,,	bir*d*
ḍh	,, ,,	ढ्	,, ,, ,,	*dh*	,,	re*d*-*h*ot
ṇ	,, ,,	ण्	,, ,, ,,	(cerebral n)		bo*n*d
t	,, ,,	त्	,, ,, ,,	*t*	,,	French
th	,, ,,	थ्	,, ,, ,,	*th*	,,	*th*umb
d	,, ,,	द्	,, ,, ,,	*th*	,,	*th*ough
dh	,, ,,	ध्	,, ,, ,,	*th*	,,	brea*the* *h*ard
n	,, ,,	न्	,, ,, ,,	(dental n)		Pe*n*
p	,, ,,	प्	,, ,, ,,	*p*	,,	*p*un
ph	,, ,,	फ्	,, ,, ,,	*ph*	,,	to*p*-*h*at
b	,, ,,	ब्	,, ,, ,,	*b*	,,	*b*at
bh	,, ,,	भ्	,, ,, ,,	*bh*	,,	a*bh*or
m	,, ,,	म्	,, ,, ,,	*m*	,,	*m*an
y	,, ,,	य्	,, ,, ,,	*y*	,,	*y*oung
r	,, ,,	र्	,, ,, ,,	*r*	,,	*r*ust
l	,, ,,	ल्	,, ,, ,,	*l*	,,	*l*ump
v	,, ,,	व्	,, ,, ,,	*v* or *w*	,,	le*v*y, *w*ater
s	,, ,,	श्	,, ,, ,,	(palatal s)		
ṣ	,, ,,	ष्	,, ,, ,,	*sh*	,,	*sh*ip
s	,, ,,	स्	,, ,, ,,	*s*	,,	*s*un
h	,, ,,	ह	,, ,, ,,	*h*	,,	*h*ome

The following points may also be noted :

(1) All Sanskrit words, except when they are proper nouns, or have come into common use in English, or represent a class of literature, cult, sect, or school of thought, are italicized.

(2) Anglicized Sanskrit words like 'kārmic', saṁsāric', 'Arhathood', etc. are romanized.

(3) Current geographical names, except in cases where their Sanskrit forms are given, or in special cases where the context requires it, and all modern names from the commencement of the nineteenth century, are given in their usual spelling and without diacritical marks.

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1

INDIA'S EDUCATIONAL VISION*

1. *Introduction*

I AM thankful to the Calcutta University for inviting me to address its Convocation. The opportunity to share the joy of thousands of students receiving their degrees and diplomas affords a welcome stimulus to a speaker who is invited to address a University Convocation. I congratulate those among the students here who are the happy recipients of degrees and diplomas today. You have crossed a milestone in your life; it has involved much hard work and struggle on your part. But it needs no saying on my part that the road ahead is harder still; it will demand of you much greater effort and struggle. What is it that will sustain you in this arduous journey of life? And what is that journey's destination?

A University Convocation address is a fit medium to summon the youthful traveller who has crossed the milestone of formal education to pause, to look back over the road traversed, to look forward to the long, long way still lying ahead, and to try, if possible, to get a glimpse of the meaning and significance of all this that we call our education and life endeavour.

2 *Our Emerging Nation*

What is the society that is waiting to receive an Indian youth who has completed his university education today? In a national system of education, this is a vital question to be asked and answered by every student. If there is one characteristic that distinguishes modern India from all her past epochs, it is the quality of youthful dynamism. What we witness all around us today is the rapid modernization of an ancient society; sensitive minds can catch the sounds of crumbling social edfices all round and the coming up of new ones.

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* Address delivered at the Calcutta University Convocation on 15 February 1966

It is already evident that the modern transition in India is not going to be a mere patchwork affair. The nation is dead set to create a new future for itself and not a mere repetition of any of its past epochs, however glorious they may have been. The revoultionary aim of the modern renaissance in India was termed *root and branch reform* by Swami Vivekananda, one of its most authentic leaders and spokesmen. Conveying Vivekananda's vision of the India of the future, Sister Nivedita says in her famous book *The Master as I Saw Him* (pp. 201-202):

> 'I had asked him, in the morning, to tell me, in broad outline, what he felt to be the points of difference between his own schemes for the good of India and those preached by others. It was impossible to draw him out on this subject. On the contrary, he expressed appreciation of certain personal characteristics and lines of conduct adopted by some of the leaders of other schools, and I regarded the question as dismissed. Suddenly, in the evening, he returned to the subject on his own accord.
>
> ' "I disagree with all those", he said, "who are giving their superstitions back to my people. Like the Egyptologist's interest in Egypt, it is easy to feel an interest in India that is purely selfish. One may desire to see again the India of one's books, one's studies. one's dreams. *My* hope is to see again the strong points of that India, reinforced by the strong points of this age, only in a natural way. The new state of things must be a *growth from within.*"

3. *New India, a Growth from Within*

What is the meaning and significance of the national hope voiced by Vivekananda in the above passage? Let us view the three constituent elements in this hope: First, he refers to the strong points in the old Indian tradition; second, he speaks of the strong points of the modern age, meaning thereby the tested and universal elements of the modern Western tradition; and third, he envisages the forging of new India as a *growth from within,* by the assimilation by her people of the strong points of the modern age with the strong points of their own age-old national tradition.

The strong points of any cultural tradition lie primarily in its concept of human excellence and in the measure of its achievement. Among the many cultural legacies that the modern age has inherited, we can discern two types, one represented by the Greeko-Roman and the other by the Indian. In each of these two legacies, we can discern a distinctive view of man and his highest excellence. The initial material bases of culture were generally common in almost all developed cultures of the past; these are a certain measure of socio-economic security through settled agriculture and simple arts and crafts, and some measure of effective socio-political organization. Once this is achieved, cultures begin to diverge from each other; the sole determinant of the divergence of each culture from the rest, at this stage, is the direction of its mental life, the questions it asks, and the answers it receives, from experience. These stirrings in the mind of man signify the onset of a conscious and deliberate control and guidance of life's forces. In man, biological evolution, at this level, becomes self-conscious and purposive. It advances from the organic or physical to the higher fields of mind and thought. Twentieth-century biology recognizes this as the special field of human evolution where, in the words of Sir Julian Huxley, quality replaces quantity as the central criterion of progress. Endowed with the unique capacities for speech communication and transmission of accumulated experience, man becomes endowed with a highly resilient cultural inheritance over and above his largely fixed and static genetic inheritance. With the aid of these, the mental component of culture advances from generation to generation, limited only by the prevailing level of technological efficiency.

4. *Concepts of Human Excellence: Greek and Indian*

It was this advance of evolution into the higher fields of mind and thought, into what Julian Huxley terms 'the science of human possibilities', that took place in two distinct areas of the ancient world, namely, India and Greece. The fruits of that advance have an universal and undying quality about them. They have nourished India, and through her, the Asian countries on the one side, and the Greeko-Roman world, and through it, the modern Western world, on the other.

The concept of man and his excellence in modern Western culture is derived from the ancient Greek concept of man as essentially a member of a community. The concept of human excellence in ancient Chinese culture is closely akin to this Greek type. This is what one may call the *political* view of man, in which even religion is viewed from the political point of view, tending to make it this-worldly and communal. Out of this view, however, has arisen all political, economic, and social struggles to improve the lot of man, on the one hand, and aggressive wars and colonial exploitations, on the other.

The finest fruit of this view is humanism. It tends to concentrate the energies of a culture in the field of the amelioration of the lot of man in *this* world. With its stress on social ethics, it helps man to achieve character, by educating him in social virtues and graces. By upholding the dignity of man, it enhances individual freedom and responsibility, and the sense of equality between man and man. On the intellectual plane, it directs the mental life of man to the adventure of knowledge, to the inquiry into the phenomena of nature and man. Through the knowledge so gained, man achieves increasing control over nature's forces and the forces of collective human life. The first constitutes scientific, and the second socio-political, technology. Armed with these two disciplines, man achieves increasing hegemony over his external environment, and steady enhancement of his own welfare, individual and collective.

5. *The Greek Concept of Man : Its Strength and Weakness*

This was the concept of human excellence upheld in Greeko-Roman culture. It gives us a picture of disciplined energy and resource, physical, emotional, and intellectual; it conveys the idea of man fired with the Promethean spark, unafraid of nature, unthwarted by obstacles, and inspired by the heroic maxim of 'dare, ever dare, and always dare', as voiced by Danton of the French Revolution. This concept of man was the priceless legacy left by the Greeko-Roman culture to the modern Western culture. The Greeko-Romans did not contribute much to the sciences of nature; they were largely averse to experimental science. Their special field was the science of man, of man in society, of man, frankly this-worldly, creating and enjoying the delights of culture and civilized existence. To quote from E. M. Forster's preface to Lowes Dickinson's *The Greek View of Life:*

> 'Greece hadn't science, it is true, and she had no global commitments, but she encompassed within the tiny circuit of her city states much that affects and afflicts the

modern man in his realtionship to society. And because her writers were intelligent and because they were sensitive, she has been able to send us news on these urgent matters which is still fresh, although it is over two thousand years.'

6. *India and the Challenge of the Modern West*

Into this Greeko-Roman humanist legacy, the modern West has infused a new energy, namely, the energy of science and technology. The combined energy of the ancient and the modern in the Western tradition has burst all regional bounds and become pervasive of the whole world, throwing a challenge to every cultural legacy in the modern world. It is this challenge with its strong and weak points mixed up together, that India has been facing since the nineteenth century. Few cultures in the modern world have been able to stand up to this powerful challenge. In the passage from Niveditā quoted earlier, we have seen Vivekananda referring to the strong points of the Indian cultural tradition. What are these strong points in our culture which can stand up to the modern challenge, meet it on an equal footing, and contribute something substantial to its enrichment, even while enriching itself with its contributions?

I have earlier said that India has been experiencing the crumbling down of many of her old social edifices in the wake of her contact with the West. Old social edifices crumble when the values which sustain them become outworn and obsolete, just like old buildings falling apart when the cement between their bricks becomes weak and loses the power to bind. It can be expected therefore that nothing that is weak in the Indian cultural tradition, nothing that is outworn and obsolete, nothing that is out of tune with the demands of the modern age, will be able to stand the onrush of the modern transition. It is worthy of mention that all the leaders of the modern renaissance in India, who had insight into the inherent strong points of the Indian tradition, welcomed the impact of the modern Western culture on India and the opportunity it provided to build a stronger and purer India.

7. *Vivekananda and the Indian Renaissance*

This positive approach is most evident in Vivekananda who, in the sweep of his thought and the loftiness of his vision, may be ranked as the foremost architect, not only of his own country's future, but, what may eventually turn out to be, one of the architects of a more healthy future world order as well. Speaking about him to Romain Rolland, Rabindranath Tagore said:

> 'If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him, everything is positive and nothing negative.'

In his book, *Discovery of India*, Jawaharlal Nehru says about him (p. 400):

> 'Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems; he was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.'

If Vivekananda envisaged a 'root and branch reform' and welcomed the impact of modern world forces in India, he also had intimate communion with, and faith in, the strong and undying elements in his country's heritage. He had seen in the glorious life of his own master, Sri Ramakrishna, the reauthentication of these strong and undying elements, and also experienced them in his own life. This strong and undying element is initially the contribution of the Upaniṣads, in their vision of a new dimension of human excellence distinct from the one bequeathed by the Greeks. As the Greeks and others specialized in the subject of man in society, man in space and time, India through the Upaniṣads specialized in the subject of man in depth, man above and beyond his political and social dimensions. This yielded the *spiritual* view of man as distinct from, as was stated earlier, the ***political*** view of the Greeks. Ancient Greece studied the *without* of nature as revealed by the senses, and ancient India inquired into the *within* of nature as revealed in one of nature's unique products, namely, man, as revealed in the depths of his consciousness and ego sense.

8. *The Upaniṣads and Indian Culture*

It was an inquiry which challenged not only life but also death, and did not stop till it had revealed the immortal and divine Self of man, the Atman, of which, as the Vedas express it, life and death are but shadows—*yasya chāyā amṛtaṁ yasya mṛtyuḥ.*

No culture can achieve depth without its sponsoring philosophy tackling the problem of death. This was one of the major drawbacks of Greek culture, which failed to assimilate to itself the deeper legacy left by Socrates and the Mystery Religions. This may also be said of the modern Western culture which has failed to *assimilate* to itself the deep spirituality of the Christian religion. Says Lowes Dickinson in his *This Greek View of Life* (p. 68):

> 'The more completely the Greek felt himself to be at home in the world, the more happily and freely he abandoned himself to the exercise of his powers, the more intensely and vividly he lived in action and in passion, the more alien, bitter, and incomprehensible did he find the phenomena of age and death. On this problem, so far as we can judge, he received from his religion but little light and still less consolation. The music of his brief life closed with a discord unresolved; and even before reason had brought her criticism to bear upon his creed, its deficiency was forced upon him by his feeling'.

What the ancient Greeks neglected became the ruling passion of the ancient Indians. Starting as a trickle in the earlier period, this intimation of something profound and significant within man became a flood in the epoch of the Upanisads, issuing in a systematic, detached, and scientific pursuit of the truth of the inner world, of the depths of experience. The Upaniṣads convey to us an impression of the tremendous fascination that this new field of inquiry held for the contemporary Indian mind. And that fascination has continued to hold India's mind in thrall down to our own times. This new field is today beginning to attract the serious attention of advanced thinkers in the modern age.

9. *The Indian Concept of Man: Its Strength and Weakness*

By their emphasis on inner penetration, by their whole-hearted advocacy of what the ancient Greeks centuries later formulated in the dictum: 'Man, know thyself', but at which they themselves had stopped half way, the Upaniṣads gave a permanent orientation to the Indian cultural experiment, and initiated a scientific and non-dogmatic tradition in the field of religion. To adapt E. M. Forster's remark about the legacy of Greece, quoted earlier, 'much that *affects* us and *afflicts* us' in India, and in the countries influenced by Indian culture, is the fruit of this Upaniṣadic orientation. The stress on inward depth had, however, one special consequence for Indian culture, in that all its expansive outward movements throughout history have been non-aggressive; every word of its message for man 'has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it ... and therefore we live', as remarked by Vivekananda (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 106).

The supreme fruit of this inward penetration was, as was said earlier, the discovery of the Ātman, the immortal divine Self of man and the universe, infinite and therefore non-dual. Referring to the significance of this concept of human excellence in his address at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, Vivekananda says:

> 'Is man a tiny boat in a tempest, raised one moment on the foamy crest of a billow and dashed down into a yawning chasm the next, rolling to and fro at the mercy of good and bad actions—a powerless, helpless wreck in an ever-raging, ever-rushing, uncompromising current of cause and effect. ... The heart sinks at the idea, yet this is the law of nature. Is there no hope? Is there no escape?—was the cry that went up from the bottom of the heart of despair.'

The answer to this cry of the human heart came to the purified heart of an Upaniṣadic sage who proclaimed his realization in trumpet voice to all humanity, addressing them as *amṛtasya putrāḥ,* children of immortality (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad,* 2.5 and 3.8):

Śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ
ā ye dhāmāni divyāni tasthuḥ;
Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ māhāntam
ādityavarnaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt
Tameva viditvā atimṛtyumeti,
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya—

'Hear, ye children of immortality! Even ye that reside in the higher spheres! I have *realized* the infinite Self of man, luminous as the sun and beyond all darkness (of ignorance and delusion). Realizing Him alone can man transcend death; there is no other way to the goal.'

Īśāvāsyamidaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat— 'All this that is changeful in this ephemeral world must be enveloped by the Lord', sings the opening verse of the *Īśā Upaniṣad.*

The Upaniṣads exhort man to realize this truth for himself. In the trail blazed by this spiritual discovery marched India, first one part, then another, until the initial spiritual leaven had leavened the whole country. It is an arresting procession of spiritual seekers, among whom the most epoch-making luminaries were Buddha, Śaṅkara, and Caitanya in the historic past, and Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in the present.

Universality, non-aggressiveness, and humanism are three of the essential values which Indian culture derived from the spirituality of her Upaniṣads. Its concern is with man as such and not with man cut up into caste, creed, sect, or race. The achievement by man of his highest glory and excellence is what it seeks and advocates. The Upaniṣads taught India to see that excellence in spirituality.

The distinctiveness of a culture is revealed in the type of man in whom that culture finds its own highest excellence embodied. A culture is worldly, if wordly success is what its most admired hero represents; it is spiritual or unworldly, if renunciation and spirituality are what its most admired hero embodies. Such admiration acts as a silent leaven in the rest of the body-politic. If there is any truth in calling Indian culture spiritual, it is not because all or most of the Indians are more spiritual than other people; but it derives from the fact that the most admired hero of the Indian people has been, and is, the man of God; and that the deepfelt aspiration of the Indian people is to be spiritual themselves. To quote Dr. Radhakrishnan from his book *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (pp. 381-82):

> 'The ideal man of India is not the magnanimous man of Greece or the valiant knight of medieval Europe, but the free man of the spirit, who has attained insight into the universe by rigid discipline and practice of disinterested virtues; who has freed imself from the prejudices of his time and place. It is India's pride that she has clung fast to this ideal and produced in every generation and in every part of the country, from the time of the *ṛṣis* of the Upaniṣads and Buddha to Ramakrishna and Gandhi, men who strove sucessfully to realize this ideal.'

If *adhyātma vidyā,* the science of spirituality, is the strongest element in the Indian heritage, positive sciences and technology form her weakest points. She had made splendid contributions in these fields for centuries. But drawn by the lure of the divine within, and following the technique of meditation and inner withdrawal, she comparatively neglected the world without and the technique of action and struggle in that outer world; and this neglect of man's outer life became almost cruel in succeeding centuries. This is the one single cause behind almost all the maladies afflicting modern Indian society, not only its poverty and ignorance, but also its piety-fringed worldiness and social harshness. A policy that produced a few spiritual giants, produced also millions of arrested and stunted personalities and any number of selfish crooks in between.

10. *Vivekananda's Tackling of Our National Weaknesses*

The experiences of ancient Greece and the modern West, on the one side, and India on the other, reveal the strength and weakness of all specializations in the field of culture; it also demonstrates the partial character of all existing cultures, and their complementarity. This is particularly true of the Indian and Western cultural legacies. That these two are not antithetical but basically akin was brought home to our people by Vivekananda who traced the cause of our national degradation to our attitude of false superiority, to our considering ourselves as the 'chosen people', and to our consequent policy of national isolation from the rest of the world. Speaking on the subject of 'The Work before Us' in Madras in 1897, Vivekananda said *(Complete Works, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 272)*:

> 'We cannot do without the world outside India; it was our foolishness that we thought we could, and we have paid the penalty by about a thousand years of slavery. That we did not go out to compare things with other nations, did not mark the workings that have been all around us, has been the one great cause of this degradation of the Indian mind. We have paid the penalty; let us do it no more.'

In a letter written from Bombay in September 1892, the Swami writes *(Letters of Swami Vivekananda,* Fourth Edition, p. 54):

> 'So you see, we must travel, we must go to foreign parts. We must see how the engine of society works in other countries, and keep free and open communication with what is going on in the minds of other nations, if we really want to be a nation again. And over and above all, we must cease to tyrannize.'

Writing from Yokohama in July 1893, he exhorts the nation thus *(ibid.*, p. 64):

> 'Come out of your narrow holes and have a look abroad. See how nations are on the march. Do you love man? Do you love your country? Then, come, let us struggle for higher and better things. ... India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men ... to struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things—sympathy for the poor and bread to their hungry mouths, enlightenment to the people at large, and struggle unto death to make men of them who have been brought to the level of beasts by the tyranny of your forefathers.'

Writing from New York in November 1894, he says (*ibid.*, p. 148):

> 'To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and the degeneration c was the building of a wall of custom—whose foundation was hatred of others—round the nation, and the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindus from coming in contact with the surrounding Buddhistic nations.
>
> 'Whatever cloak ancient or modern sophistry may try to throw over it, the inevitable result—the vindication of the moral law, that none can hate others without degenerating himeself—is that the race that was foremost amongst the ancient races is now a byword and a scorn among nations. We are object-lessons of the violation of that law which our ancestors were the first to discover and discriminate.
>
> 'Give and take is the law, and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life, hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races, and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life.
>
> 'We must mix therefore with all the races of the earth.'

11. *Assimilation of Western Values by Modern India*

What India is dead-set to achieve in the modern age is the correcting of this centuries-old imbalance in her outlook and way of life. No more is she going to neglect her outer life. This mood and earnestness is writ large on her modern renaissance which has for its aim the all-round flowering of her national genius. All the movements of India's soul—political, economic, or cultural—during the past sixty-five years of this century, have had for their one aim the awakening of our people to the realities of the modern age. The nation has been engaged in educating herself in the fundamental values, the strong points, of the modern Western culture. The first value to be absorbed was political freedom. To a people who had for centuries looked on political freedom and political slavery with an almost equal eye in their pursuit of a post-mortem salvation, political awakening was the necessary prelude to the correction of all other national imbalances. All the virtues and graces of man's social existence proceed from political freedom. Such freedom and the sense of responsibility that flows from it are the twin values that constitute the primary dignity of man. This is the modern concept of citizenship in which man achieves self-realization in the context of a free society. The adoption by free India of a democratic republican constitution for herself marks a milestone in the political education of our people. *The constitution is the first of a series of new documents, to be followed by others in due course, including a common civil code for all, which will eventually replace all existing religious codes of the country in so far as they deal with the secular life of the Indian people.*

12. *Nation-building in Modern India*

These new documents will complete the process of nation-building in India out of her diverse racial, linguistic, and religious elements; they will constitute the new national *dharma-śāstra* of this age, and provide the necessary firm secular base for Indian spiritual life, allowing for the release of the truly spiritual forces of all her great religions, what one may call her national *mokṣa-śāstra* traditions, into creative and constructive channels. *It is only when the spiritual forces of the great world religions in India become fused into a unified current of a Godward passion and a manward love that she will achieve full nationhood.*

Citizenship in a democracy involves, as I said earlier, not only freedom but also responsibility. This sense of social responsibility releases the energies of the citizen for the service of his fellow-citizens, ensuring thereby the all-round development of society. and its unity and integrity. If 'We, the People of India', have given ourselves a free constitution, as the preamble to our constitution proclaims, it is again we, the people of India, on whom lies the responsibility to ensure the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation through hard work and mutual co-operation. *In this sphere of practical politics, success depends upon the whole nation living down much of its own obsolete traditions, and assimilating the traditions of the modern West.* Such assimilation depends upon the igniting of the Promethean spark in every one of our citizens, making him or her a reservoir of disciplined energy and resource.

This is what is being done in our country since our independence. During the last eighteen years after independence, India has achieved by way of economic development and social transformation more than what she had achieved in the hundred years before independence. This is proof of the youthful vitality of the nation, and its assimilation of the spirit of energy and progress, action and endeavour, of the modern West. Under the pressure of mounting problems yet remaining to be solved, the nation should not fail to recognize its own solid achievements. Constant self-deprecation saps the vitality of a nation, says Vivekananda, by destroying its faith in itself. *Ajñaśca aśraddadhānaśca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati*—'the ignorant, the faithless, and the doubting come to ruin', says the *Gītā* (IV. 40).

13. *Modern India: The Meeting Ground of the Ancient Greek and the Ancient Hindu*

Nation-building in the case of India, we should always remember, means nothing more than forging a new body-politic for her undying soul. That soul had so far been housed in a body inconsistent with its own majesty and glory. No other society in the world has exhibited such a contrast between ideals and realities as India in her spiritual vision and her body-politic. In the poignant words of Vivekananda *(Letters of Swami Vivekananda,* p. 69.)

> 'No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism.'

For the first time in her long history, India has resolved to translate her vision of human excellence into reality by earnestly embarking on the creation of a free and egalitarian society offering opportunities for self-development to every one of her citizens.

Nivedita, in her book quoted earlier, refers to the words of Vivekananda, uttered during his second voyage to the West, giving this much-needed orientation to the Indian tradition (p. 203):

> 'Hitherto, the great fault of our Indian religion has lain in its knowing only two words—renunciation and *mukti* (salvation). Only "*mukti*" here! Nothing for the householder!
>
> 'But these are the very people whom I want to help. ...
>
> 'And so strength must come to the nation through education.'

Pointing to the importance of this utterance, Nivedita remarks *(ibid):*

> 'I thought at the time, and I think increasingly as I consider it, that this one talk of my master had been well worth the whole voyage, to have heard.'

Whatever success India has so far achieved in this adventure, in this war against poverty, social injustice, and general stagnation, is the fruit of her assimilation of the spirit of humanism and progress of the modern West. This is the tribute that our ancient nation is paying today to the spirit of ancient Greece and the modern West. It is the finest tribute that any culture can pay to another. It was Vivekananda, as I have already said, who first pointed out the basic kinship between the strong points of the two cultural legacies of India and the West. He foresaw that modern world conditions afforded the best opportunity for the evolution of a complete human civilization by the cross fertilization of these two legacies. He considered India to be the finest laboratory for this momentous cultural fusion; he preached the Indian national philosophy of Vedānta in East and West alike, in view of its synthesis of the inner and outer aspects of human life in its synoptic vision of a comprehensive spirituality; and he bent the energies of her modern renaissance in that high direction. Stressing this central feature of the Indian renaissance in his lecture on 'The Work Before Us', Vivekananda says (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 271):

> 'England, nay the whole of Europe (and America), has to thank Greece for its civilization. It is Greece that speaks through everything (in the West). Every building, every piece of furniture has the impress of Greece upon it; European (Western) science and art are nothing but Grecian. (Words within brackets not Vivekananda's)
>
> '*Today the ancient Greek is meeting the ancient Hindu on the soil of India.* Thus slowly and silently the leaven has come; the broadening, the life-giving, and the revivalist movement that we see all around us has been worked out by these forces together. A broader and more generous conception of life is before us; and although at first we have been deluded a little and wanted to narrow things down, we are finding out today that these generous impulses which are at work, these broader conceptions of life, are the logical interpretation of what is in our ancient books. They are the carrying out, to the rigorously logical effect, of the primary conceptions of our own ancestors. *To become broad, to go out, to amalgamate, to universalize, is the end of our aims.* And all the time, we have been making ourselves smaller and smaller, and dissociating ourselves, contrary to the plans laid down in our scriptures.'

14. *Spirituality and Evolution*

In developing and perfecting its *adhyātma vidyā,* the science of the Self, India has given a spiritual direction to human evolution consistent with the dignity of man and his infinite potentialities. Twentieth-century biology, as I said before, enthrones quality over quantity as the criterion of evolution at the human stage, and upholds fulfilment as its goal, in place of numerical increase or mere survival. The Upaniṣads uphold that this search for fulfilment will take man progressively beyond his physical and sensate awareness which is finite and limited, and give him a glimpse of his infinite spiritual dimension. It is only through such spiritual growth that man can achieve fulfilment by realizing his true dimension as the Ātman, which is infinite and universal, and embrace his fellow-beings in bonds of love and service.

This is the strongest of the strong elements of the Indian heritage referred to in the remark of Vivekananda quoted in the earlier part of this lecture. It is an element needed to be fostered not only by India, but also by the modern world. As the modern West has posed a challenge to India, India in turn has thrown a challenge to the West. Both are healthy challenges, adequate response to which by each will ensure the steady march of man everywhere to the evolutionary goal of fulfilment. The West has need to find a remedy for what E.M. Forster, in the passage quoted earlier, refers to as those elements of her Greek legacy which *afflict* her. This malady that afflicts the modern West has been best described by the German philosopher, Schopenhauer *(The World as Will and Idea,* Vol. I, p. 404):

> 'Almost all men who are secure from want and care, now that at last they have thrown off all other burdens, become a burden to themselves.'

Since the two legacies are complementary, and since the Indian contribution refers to man in depth, the West may find in the Indian legacy that sought-for remedy for the weak points of her otherwise noble and dynamic cultural tradition. Vivekananda refers to this in his lecture on 'The Mission of the Vedānta' delivered in India in 1897. Though a bit long, it will be found relevant in the present context. Says the Swami *(Complete Works,* Vol.III, Eighth Edition, pp. 181-82):

> 'We have, as it were, thrown a challenge to the whole world from the most ancient times. In the West, they are trying to solve the problem how much a man can

possess, and we are trying here to solve the problem on how little a man can live. This struggle and this difference will still go on for some centuries. But if history has any truth in it, and if prognostications ever prove true, it must be that those who train themselves to live on the least, and control themselves well, will in the end gain the battle, and that those who run after enjoyment and luxury, however vigorous they may seem for the moment, will have to die and become annihilated. There are times in the history of a man's life, nay, in the history of the lives of nations, when a sort of world-weariness becomes painfully predominant. It seems that such a tide of world-weariness has come upon the Western world. There, too, they have their thinkers, great men; and they are already finding out that his race after gold and power is all vanity of vanities; many, nay, most of the cultured men and women there are already weary of this competition, this struggle, this brutality of their commercial civilization, and they are looking forward towards something better. There is a class which still clings on to political and social changes as the only panacea for the evils ... , but among the great thinkers there, other ideals are growing. They have found out that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is a change of the soul itself for the better that alone will cure the evils of life. No amount of force, or government, or legislative cruelty will change the conditions of a race, but it is spiritual culture and ethical culture alone that can change wrong racial tendencies for the better. Thus these races of the West are eager for some new thought, for some new philosophy; the religion they have had, Christianity, although good and glorious in many respects, has been imperfectly understood, and is, as understood hitherto, found to be insufficient. The thoughtful men of the West find in our ancient philosophy, especially in Vedānta, the new impulse of thought they are seeking, the very spiritual food and drink for which they are hungering and thirsting. And it is no wonder that this is so.'

15. *Practical Vedānta*

The strong point of the Indian tradition is, as we have seen, its vision of the spiritual dimension of the human personality, and the scientific tradition of religion in which this vision is embodied. Stressing as it does the spirit of seeking and inquiry, and upholding experiment and experience as the criterion of true religion, the Indian tradition frees religion from all dogmatic and creedal limitations and blends with the spirit of modern science. This Indian spiritual tradition has within it the energy and the power to *deepen* the scientific humanism of the modern West. The Western tradition, similarly, has the energy and the power within it to *broaden* the scope of the Indian tradition, channelling its blessings from a small minority of the spiritually gifted to the millions of ordinary men and women. This synthesis of the inner and the outer, of the sacred and the secular, had already been achieved *in the plane of thought* in the unifying philosophy of Vedānta, and especially in its great formulation, namely, the *Gītā*. Its achievement *in the plane of the work-a-day world* is what Vivekananda gave to modern India as his unique contribution in his philosophy and programme of Practical Vedānta, and what the nation is engaged in ever since.

Our programme of material improvement of the country does not necessarily commit us to the philosophy of materialsim. On the other hand, our spiritual philosophy, as Vivekananda pointed out, considers involuntary poverty to be unspiritual and commits us to the improvement of the material condition of the people with a view to improving their spiritual life. This is the meaning of his plea for what he terms a 'toned down materialism' for India. 'I do not believe in a religion', says he, 'which cannot wipe the widow's tears or stop the orphan's wails'; again, 'even if a dog goes hungry in my country, my religion will be to find food for that dog'.

16. *Our Youth and Our Emerging Nation*

Such is the Indian society that is waiting to receive each and every one of our youths who complete their university education today. *It is a society of bubbling hopes and mounting problems, with an impressive past and a glorious future.* Every youthful generation of modern India owes it to itself and to the nation at large to strive to become strong and dynamic. Such strength is the product of faith in oneself and in one's country's heritage, reinforced by the *assimilation* of all available knowledge, national and international. This is the aim of all true education. Vivekananda defined the scope of our national education as the assimilation of the spirit of Vedānta and modern science. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* in a memorable passage (I.1.10) refers to the energy of character generated by education:

Yadeva vidyaya karoti, śraddhayā, upaniṣadā, tadeva vīryavattaraṁ bhavati—'Whatever is done througn mastery of the know-how, through faith (in oneself and one's cause) and through inner meditation—that alone becomes charged with the highest energy'.

17. *Revolution: The Indian Way*

In the passage from Nivedita's book quoted at the beginning of this lecture, Vivekananda had told us that new India will be a *growth from within;* and that this growth from within will be the result of the assimilation by her children of the strong points of the ancient Indian and the modern Western traditions. This is a significant point to remember in studying the development of modern India. In these three words, namely, *growth from within,* Vivekananda has given to our nation its *national educational vision.* Nations have been shaped by impact from outside either by a military or an ideological invasion; in such cases, the energy within the nation succumbs to the outside impact. Nations have also been shaped by violent revolutions from within due to the explosion of long-thwarted social aspirations. But India in her long history has stood many such outside impacts, revealing thereby the presence of a tremendous core of inner strength. She has also avoided violent explosions from within by timely adjustments. But the inner strength demonstrated by India during the past several centuries was defensive in its posture and apologetic in its expression, when neither did the tree of Indian life put forth fresh shoots nor did it die. It was a period of general national stagnation. *But today our ancient motherland is bubbling with a new youthfulness; it is bursting with a new life, inner and outer, by the assimilation of all available nourishment of knowledge and ideas.* The process undoubtedly will be intensified in the coming decades. Nothing can hinder or stop it.

The growth of a new and dynamic India, effecting revolutionary changes within her own body-politic consistent with her vision of human excellence, and exerting her distinctive influence on the rest of the world, is the vision that should inspire all our education and politics, life and religion.

If this is the aim of the modern renaissance, who are the agents to work it out? The instruments of social change in any modern society are the educated youth of that society. Ever since India began to experience her modern renaissance over a century and a half ago in the wake of Raja Rammohun Roy, her educated youth have been the mainstay of all her revolutionary movements in the social, political, cultural, and spiritual fields.

18. *Our Educational Stagnation*

This is the national context, awareness of which will make our education purposive, not only during the formal schooling period, but throughout life. Most of the ailments of our present-day educational system, most of the maladies afflicting our students and teachers, proceed from educational objectives too narrowly conceived, namely, examinations and jobs. Our educational vision must assimilate the wisdom of Sri Ramakrishna's conviction: 'As long as I live, so long do I learn.' Education so conceived becomes continual growth of personality, steady development of character, and the qualitative improvement of life. A trained mind has the capacity to draw spiritual nourishment from every experience, be it defeat or victory, sorrow or joy. Education is *training the mind* and not *stuffing the brain*. Character efficiency is the fruit of the former while the latter produces mental stagnation and its attendant character deficiencies. Every country today is suffering from this undue stress on examinations and the stuffing-the-brain process behind it; but it is prevalent in its most harmful form in our education. The definition of current American education given by an American journal *(National Parent-Teacher Journal,* April 1955) as 'the mysterious process whereby information passes from the notes of the professor on to the note-book of the student,through his pen, without entering the mind of either of them', is an apt description of much of what passes for education in India today.

19. *Our Educational Vision*

This educational stagnation can be removed only by treating education primarily as training of the mind and, as Vivekananda defines it, as 'the life-building, man-making, character-making *assimilation* of ideas.' The entire educational method and programme should keep this high objective in view. Vivekananda's writings 'make their own irresistible appeal', as remarked by Gandhiji in his Foreword to *Education,* the little selection of Vivekananda's utterances on education. Here are some of these precious utterances:

> 'Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language, and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated? Is this education?... Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bhārata, proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfil this want? The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the

> struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name?
>
> We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet. What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day.'

Again:

> 'The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education.'

In the light of these ideas of Vivekananda, let us assess our developmental activities, in general, and education, in particular. All our nation-building programmes should have two objectives—one short-term, the other long-term. Too much stress on the short-term, and too little or none at all on the long-term, is what is actually obtaining in our educational, political, and other fields. The short-term objective in politics is what we stress when we view it from one election to the next; this is the way of the *mere politician*. Its long-term objective is the political education of the Indian people so that every citizen becomes an intelligent participant in the national life, and the state becomes strengthened with the strength and efficiency of its 450 million awakened citizens; this is the way of the *statesman* who combines the short-term and long-term objectives in a synoptic vision of total human evolution. India had the recent example of such a statesman in Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, who never lost sight of the qualitative improvement of man. Education, similarly, has been viewed only in its short-term objective by most of the Indian students and, it is sad to note, by the Indian state as well. To the student, it means merely passing an examination and securing a job; to the state, it means largely turning out so many mechanics and fitters, doctors and lawyers, teachers and clerks, and a host of other social functionaries. The state has need of the services of thousands of well-trained technicians of all types for its developmental programmes; it is also imperative that, with a view to strengthening the democratic base of Indian life, universal compulsory education, up to the primary level to begin with and up to the school final level eventually, is achieved with the minimum possible delay. This is therefore a legitimate and urgent objective; what is not so legitimate is the ignoring of the long-term objective, which, as we have seen before, is the qualitative improvement of man through the qualitative improvement of education at all levels, which means the progressive assimilation by every citizen of the finest heritage of East and West; citizens in whom the diverse forces of the spirit—faith and reason, the sacred and the secular, and meditation and action—so long at loggerheads with each other, have achieved a happy synthesis, giving man an experience of complete fulfilment.

20. *Conclusion*

This is our educational vision. A nation without vision perishes. Since India has not perished, and shall not perish, let us cease to divorce our short-term objectives from the long-term ones, and make education the surest means to human fulfilment, individual and collective. Even while planning our institutional programmes of education through schools, colleges, and universities, let us also not lose sight of the fact that the highest education is gained not from institutions, however well conducted they be, but from illumined men and women. The former give us only *aparā vidyā* or ordinary knowledge, while from the latter we get *parā vidyā* or supreme knowledge. Narendranath Datta was one of the brilliant students who blazoned the name of this University of Calcutta. But this student, let us never forget, became Vivekananda, who, in the words of Romain Rolland (*Life of Vivekananda,* Third Impression, p.192),

> 'Of all modern men achieved the highest equilibrium between the diverse forces of thought, and was one of the first to sign a treaty of peace between the two forces eternally warring within us: the forces of reason and faith'.

only after he secured a still higher education at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar, who himself, strange to note, did not undergo any institutional education.

India's educational vision whispers into the ears of every student who passes out of her institutions of higher learning that there is a still higher education which yields the knowledge of the infinite Self of man, the Atman. Surplus human energy accumulated at the secular or sensate level of life, if not channelled into this higher spiritual direction, will recoil on the personality and create emotional disturbances and inner tensions, leading man further and further away from his ideal of fulfilment, in spite of all the technological products of his wealth and power, knowledge and leisure. Our institutional education will be judged a complete success only if the students it turns out are not insensitive to these gentle whispers, but are moved, by the fascination of this deeper mystery, to continue their education throughout life through the medium of their life and work, to convert their very breadwinning into self-knowledge, until the highest spiritual knowledge is gained. In the passionate words of poet Tagore (*Lectures and Addresses*, pp.27-28):

> 'The object of education is to give man the unity of truth. ...
>
> 'I believe in a spiritual world, not as anything separate from this world, but as its innermost truth. With the breath we draw, we must always feel this truth, that we are living in God. Born in this great world, full of the mystery of the infinite, we cannot accept our existence as a momentary outburst of chance, drifting on the current of matter towards an eternal nowhere.'

For all students of the modern age, ancient India presents the glowing example of Nārada of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* as the prototype of this spiritual sensitivity in a student of learning and talent, who was dissatisfied with institutional education and mere book knowledge, and who used both as spurs to spiritual knowledge and wisdom.

Let me conclude this discussion of our national educational vision with the clarion call given to us by Swamī Vivekananda: 'Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached!'

2

EDUCATION AND TRADITIONAL VALUES*

1. *Introduction*

THE subject of 'Education and Traditional Values' should be treated as of utmost importance by our country today, when it is passing through a tremendous transition.

The forces generated by science and the democratic idea have been operating in the modern world for over three centuries to transform human life. Already a vast amount of transformation has taken place in some areas, and the impact is being felt in the rest of the areas of the world as well. Our country has been feeling the effect of these forces in a general way for the past half a century; but since our attainment of political independence and the initiation of our five-year plans, we are being thrown, with increasing momentum year by year, into the very vortex of these forces. India, today, has to reckon with them. Many an old cultural, social, and religious landmark in our country is crumbling down and vanishing in the wake of the fast moving pace of our industrialization programmes. Human adjustment to these fast-moving changes in the social and cultural *milieu* is becoming increasingly difficult. In the absence of such adjustment, man gets twisted and mis-shapen, and becomes a focus of tension and sorrow. A chain is as strong as its weakest link. The modern age in India is the link between her hoary past and her endless future. The modern age demands of our citizens an understanding of these forces, an acceptance of them, and an intelligent assimilation of their values, so that India may forge a new character and a new destiny for herself. This is the problem before Indian education today.

2. *Uniqueness of the Interaction of Cultural Forces in India*

Compared to other countries, there is something special and, if I may say so, significant in the interaction and outcome of these modern forces in the Indian context. For that context is constituted of a deep and abiding religious consciousness, which derives its strength from a rational and comprehensive philosophy. Since historic times, religion has been the most vital force moulding our individual and collective life; it is so even today. The Indian tradition is shot through and through by the religious idea and impulse. It has given to the Indian tradition strength and vitality to stand the vicissitudes of her long history, resilience and adaptability to adjust to changing times and conditions, and an amazing assimilative power to synthesize the new with the old, making for continuity in the context of progress. Says Jawaharlal Nehru in his lecture on 'Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda' delivered at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, in 1949 (*Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda,* p. 2):

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* Paper contributed to a Symposium on *Education and Traditional Values* organized by the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with Unesco, New Delhi, on 27 September 1962

> 'India never ignored, in the course of her long history, and in spite of the other activities of the world, the spiritual values of life, and she always laid certain stress on the search for truth and has always welcomed the searchers of truth by whatever names they may call themselves. And so India built up this tradition of the search for truth and reality, and at the same time she built up the tradition of the utmost tolerance to those who earnestly strive for the truth in their own way.'

3. *The Main Problem of Indian Education*

The problem for India in the modern age is the assimilation of the forces released by science, technology, and democracy which are being grafted on to her traditional tree. The success of this experiment depends upon two factors: one, the vitality of the spiritual sap running in the tree, and two, its hospitality to the new forces contained in the grafts

These new forces in the grafts had their birth first in Europe, and later in other parts of the Western world, including the U.S.S.R. They had a revolutionary effect on those countries. The intellectual force of science and the social force of technology and democracy have had devastating effects on the traditional thought and life of the Western man. These new forces could not be assimilated to the Western religious consciousness and cultural tradition, which did not prove a hospitable soil to them. The result is a schism in the mind of the Western man, indicated by ever-recurrent conflicts—faith in conflict with reason, the spirit at loggerheads with matter, and man in opposition with the universe and with brother man. In such a situation, the human mind despairs of all higher spiritual values, and tends to get involved and entombed in tangible material pursuits. The once powerful Christian and humanist tradition has become reduced to a thin veneer of the more dominant modern tradition.

'What are the driving forces of our culture?', asks Mr. C. J. Dippel, Chief Chemist in the Philips Physical Laboratory at Eindhoven, Holland, in his article on 'Renewal or Leave-Taking' (appearing in *Delta—A Review of Arts, Life and Thought in the Netherlands,* Autumn 1960, p. 17) and continues:

> 'Lust for power, productivity, the creation and satisfaction of needs, speculation on man's material instability, excessive consumption, expansion, an ideology of liberty accompanied by the most primitive rules for the selection of leaders. The cause or the result: an enormous diversity of moral values, varying from a reckless hedonism to a cynical moral vacuum; speed, turbulence; an almost automatic compulsion to run after the fruits that our culture holds out to us. The stabilizing factor of our society is its material success and managerial character; the general herd merely adds its vitality—without responsibility—to the inertia of this cultural movement. It is clear that "things first", "people second" is a guideline that we share with Soviet Communism. Hence the overriding force of economics. The question "what should be done" is decided for us on the free market and in the sphere of power politics. Our Christian past has become a burden and nothing more. We have probably never yet rightly understood the social and cultural implications of the Gospel.'

If even a part of this estimate is true, India has to view with deep concern the outcome of her grafting experiment. Her handling of these new forces, the method and manner of her approach as much as the outcome of her endeavours, is of more than national significance and relevance.

A period of profound transition is not the time for complacency. India has experienced stormy periods in her long history. She has responded successfully to all such challenges on the strength of her tenacious loyalty to fundamental spiritual values, which she consequently placed at the foundation of her national culture and tradition.

Addressing the assembled congregation at St. Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta, on 24 August 1962, on the occasion of his enthronement as the eleventh Metropolitan of India and the fifteenth Bishop of

Calcutta, Rev. Dr. Lakdasa De Mel referred to India's unbroken cultural tradition since the days of the Indus Valley Civilization, and said (*Statesman*, 25 August 1962):

> 'What had distinguished Indian history during these 5,000 years was the conspicuous spiritual quest of the people.'

It is this faith in spiritual values, which has been tested in good and evil fortune, that is being challenged and menaced by the most powerful storm yet experienced by her, viz., the modern transition. All the previous challenges were mild in comparison, being only fractional, whereas this one is total. Is there not something in her age-old heritage which has the vitality to welcome these new forces—the intellectual force of tested and verified truth which is science and the social force of technology and democracy—and assimilate their values into, first, the national heritage and, through that, into the human heritage, so that these may emerge stronger and richer than before? This question widens the scope and deepens the significance of education for our democracy today.

4. *The Source of the Vitality of the Indian People*

A long history of five thousand years, uninterrupted and continuous, lies behind India. Some profound social insight and wisdom must be present in the Indian tradition to account for this miracle of national longevity. It is resilience, adaptability, and assimilative power that enable an organism to live and thrive. Their presence indicates youthfulness; their diminution indicates onset of old age; their total absence spells death. Cultures and civilizations have passed through the three stages of birth, youthful vitality, and old age, to end eventually, invariably, in death. But India has been an exception to this rule. The only conclusion to be drawn from this arresting fact is that, somewhere in the depths of this culture, there must be a focus of undying, youthful vitality, making for fresh outbursts of adaptations and assimilations in times of crisis; so that history, in the case of India, becomes a series of rejuvenations, following each cycle of birth, development, and decay, but never the final death. Writes Will Durant in his *Story of Civilization* (Vol. I, *Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 633):

> 'One cannot conclude the history of India as one can conclude the history of

> Egypt, or Babylonia, or Assyria; for that history is still being made, that civilization is still creating. ... We cannot claim for this civilization such direct gifts to our own as we have traced to Egypt and the Near East; for these last were the immediate ancestors of our own culture, while the history of India, China, and Japan flowed in another stream, and is only now beginning to touch and influence the current of occidental life. It is true that even across the Himalayan barrier India has sent to us such questionable gifts as grammar and logic, philosophy and fables, hypnotism and chess, and above all, our numerals and our decimal system. But these are not the essence of her spirit; they are trifles compared to what we may learn from her in the future. As invention, industry, and trade bind the continents together, or as they fling us into conflict with Asia, we shall study its civilizations more closely, and shall absorb, even in enmity, some of its ways and thoughts. Perhaps, in return for conquest, arrogance, and spoliation, India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of the mature mind, the quiet content of the unacquisitive soul, the calm of the understanding spirit, and a unifying, pacifying love of all living things.'

This continued youthful vitality of India has its origin in her spiritual thought and social philosophy. The Upaniṣads are the source of her spiritual and philosophical thoughts, of which the fundamental ideas are: (1) the divinity of man: (2) the non-duality and spiritual character of the ultimate reality; (3) the basic solidarity of all existence; (4) realization, and not a mere belief or creed, as the criterion of religion; and (5) the harmony of religions. These concepts breathe the spirit of the universal and human, and mark human culture at its highest and best. They gave rise to the values of tolerance, peace, gentleness, and non-aggressiveness, which became the distinctive marks of Indian culture and tradition, finding expression both in individual behaviour and state policy. Religion was, and continues to be, the source and sustenance of this culture and tradition. India did not allow the universal values and outlook of her religion to be smothered by the limitations of political affiliations. There was no identification of religion and the state. Her concept of religion did not permit a rigid creed or an exclusive, all-powerful church to get established on the Indian soil. Says Dr. Radhakrishnan (*Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 322):

> 'The emphasis on the goal of spiritual life bound together worshippers of many different types and saved the Hindus from spiritual snobbery.'

Absence of rigidity made for hospitality to new ideas. This left the way clear for experimentation from within and assimilation from without. Indian culture, religion, and society bear the impress of this long-continued, and still continuing, experimental and assimilative approach and process. This explains India's diversity and richness, on the one side, and its vitality and uninterrupted continuity, on the other.

5. *The Spiritual Background of Indian Polity*

Its social philosophy derives from its spiritual thought. Unity in diversity became the ruling idea, and not uniformity. The fact of social change was recognized by her thinkers who, while accepting the need for change, advocated also the need for preserving the continuity of tradition. *India's social philosophy enshrines the wisdom of the reconciliation of tradition and change.* The central ingredient of this wisdom is enshrined in her concepts of *Śruti* and *Smṛti*, and their interrelation. In the light of these concepts, we find that every tradition embodies two elements: (1) a set of universal, eternal, and fundamental principles and (2) a group of values derived from the first and finding expression in individual and collective attitudes and behaviour. These latter are limited, temporary, and relative in their scope and authority. The first should be upheld, while allowing the second to respond to the urge for change. In Sanskrit, this idea is expressed by saying that the *Smṛtis* change, while the *Śruti* remains. The term '*Sruti*' represents the spiritual content of religion and is always meant to be a singular, while the term '*Smṛti*.' represents its socio-political expression and always denotes a plural. The same idea is expressed in another way. *Dharma* or spiritual tradition has two aspects—the *sanātana dharma* and the *yuga dharma*, tradition eternal and tradition valid for only an epoch or an age. The first connotes the *Śruti* and the second the *Smṛti*. Says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (*Religion and Society*, p. 113):

> 'The Hindu view makes room for essential changes. There must be no violent break with social heredity, and yet the new stresses, conflicts, and confusions will have to be faced and overcome. While the truths of spirit are permanent, the rules change from age to age.'

In his 'First Public Lecture in the East', delivered in Colombo on January 15, 1897, on his return from the West, Swami Vivekananda, referring to the impact of Indian spiritual ideas on the modern world, spoke as follows on the subject of this central ingredient of the wisdom of the Indian tradition (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, pp. 111-12):

> 'At the same time, I must remark that what I mean by our religion working upon the nations outside of India comprises only the principles, the background, the foundation upon which that religion is built. The detailed workings, the minute points which have been worked out through centuries of social necessity, little ratiocinations about manners and customs and social well-being, do not rightly find a place in the category of religion. We know that, in our books, a clear distinction is made between two sets of truths. The one set is that which abides for ever, being built upon the nature of man, the nature of the soul, the soul's relation to God, the nature of God, perfection, and so on; there are also the principles of cosmology, of the infinitude of creation, or more correctly speaking, projection, the wonderful law of cyclical procession, and so on; these are eternal principles founded upon the universal laws in nature. The other set comprises the minor laws, which guide the working of our everday life. They belong more properly to the *Puraṇas,* to the *Śmṛtis,* and not to the *Śruti.* These have nothing to do with the other principles. Even in our own nation, these minor laws have been changing all the time. Customs of one age, of one *yuga,* have not been the customs of another, and as *yuga* comes after *yuga,* they will still have to change.'

6. *The Happy Outcome of the Traditional Indian Outlook*

The fruit of this social wisdom is seen in the absence, in ancient and modern Indian history, of violent social upheavals or bloody revolutions; instead, we see only steady adjustments and adaptations to new situations, keeping basic values intact. The Indian social experience has uniformly been evolution and not revolution; or rather, evolutionary changes of a revolutionary nature, without, however, serious social conflict and violence. The impact of Kṛṣṇa and Buddha, Saṅkara and the later reformers, has always been creative and constructive, peaceful and pervasive. India responded to them in a natural way, and became richer in the process. A study of the history of India shows that the concept of an unchanging Indian society is a thorough misnomer. Both in religious concepts and forms, as well as in social values and processes, India has seen revolutionary changes. Says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (*Religion and Society*, pp. 114-15):

> 'Those who are familiar with the work of Hindu commentators on Hindu law works know the magnitude of the changes effected by them ... Social flexibility has been the chief character of Hindu *dharma.* To uphold the *sanatana dharma* is not to stand still. It is to seize the vital principles and use them in modern life. All true growth preserves unity through change'.

Neither the Ṛg-Vedic gods and forms of their worship nor the Ṛg-Vedic society were in evidence a thousand years after the *Ṛg-Veda*. The very fact that there are several *Smṛtis* indicates social change; otherwise, the first *Smṛti* should have continued throughout. But the spiritual legacy of India, as represented by the *Śruti*, remains steady and clear to this day. Sri Ramakrishna's pithy saying so well explains this changing character of social laws, as represented by the *Smṛtis*, as nothing else can: 'The Moghul coins have no currency under the (East India) Company's rule.'

The *Smṛtis* themselves recognize this principle of social change. Says the *Manu Smṛti* (I. 85):

Anye kṛtayuge dharmāḥ tretayaṁ dvāpare apare;
Anye kaliyuge nṛṇāṁ yugahrāsānurūpataḥ—

'There is one set of *dharmas* for man in the *kṛta yuga;* a different set for each of the *tretā, dvāpara,* and *kali yugas;* the *dharmas* change according to the change of the *yugas.*'

7. *Regeneration of India: The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Way*

Modern Indian history also illustrates abundantly this wisdom of Indian history. The verdict on Indian history by ignorant or prejudiced historians, both Indian and foreign, as well as by unsympathetic foreign social critics, during the last one century, harped on the following themes:

1. Indian society is built on the rigid hierarchy of the caste system.
2. Caste derives its strength and sanction from the Hindu religion.
3. It finds its extreme expression in untouchability.
4. Caste cannot be destroyed without first destroying the Hindu religion.
5. By destroying Hindu religion and caste alone can a new modernized India emerge.
6. Democracy, on the one side, and Hinduism with its caste, on the other, are irreconcilable.
7. The suppression of Hindu women derives from the Hindu religion.

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8. Modern technology and industrialism will spell the final deathknell of Hinduism.
9. The various religions of India will ever remain in water-tight compartments, mutually hostile, if not warring with each other; this fact, added to the pernicious caste system, will never allow India to develop a national consciousness.

It is undoubtedly true that Indian society and the Hindu religion, during the last few centuries, did exhibit the above features in a rather prominent form. But the fault of the critics lay in exhibiting these foibles and follies as the wisdom of India. And the conclusion was clear to them: if these follies were to be overcome and a stagnant India made progressive, she has to cut adrift of her traditional moorings, borrow wisdom from outside, and reshape herself in a completely new way. This led to much iconoclastic thinking and action in the middle of the last century; it created its own counterforce in movements inspired by fear of the new, and in defence of everything old, in religion and society. This action-and-reaction process continued till the end of the century when the age-old, historically tested, wisdom of India expressed itself, gently but effectively, in Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The entire theme of Sri Ramakrishnas life was spirituality. In the words of Gandhiji ('Foreword' to *The Life of Sri Ramakrishna)*:

> 'The story of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's life is a story of religion in practice. His life enables us to see God face to face. ... Ramakrishna was a living embodiment of Godliness. ... His love knew no limits, geographical or otherwise. May his divine love be an inspiration to all who read the following pages!'

Sri Ramakrishna did not disturb any of the existing religions, nor did he start any new religion. He loved all religions and sought God through all of them. Swami Vivekananda carried the mission of his master far and wide, the mission of the spiritual regeneration of humanity. Within India itself, he saw the main obstacles to this mission in the rigidities and in the decayed elements of the Indian tradition, of which caste-exclusiveness, untouchability, and self-centred religiosity formed the more harmful ones. In his *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* and in his *Letters*, he exposed these faults and foibles of the *Śmṛti* elements of the Indian tradition, and placed before the nation the strengthening, unifying, and broadening spirituality of the Upaniṣads, or the *Sruti* elements of that tradition. He had personally witnessed the power and glory of this *Śruti* constituent of his country's tradition in the blazing life of his master. And he, therefore, exhorted the nation to fearlessly do away with the stagnant elements of the national tradition and build a new body-politic, worthy to ensoul the age-old spiritual legacy of India and the scientific and social legacy of the modern world.

8. *The Trumpet Call of Vivekananda*

A few brief quotations from his letters, written from abroad to social workers in India between 1893 and 1897, will help to show how he galvanized the Indian tradition and made it progressive:

> 'So you see, we must travel, we must go to foreign parts. We must see how the engine of society works in other countries, and keep free and open communication with what is going on in the minds of other nations, if we really want to be a nation again.' *(Letters of Swami Vivekananda,* p. 54, Fourth Edition).

> 'I cannot write what I have in my mind about the Japs in one short letter. Only I want that numbers of our young men should pay a visit to Japan every year. To the Japanese, India is still the dreamland of everything high and good. And you, what are you? ... talking twaddle all your lives, vain talkers, what are you? Come, see these people and then go and hide your faces in shame. A race of dotards, you lose your caste if you come out! Sitting down these hundreds of years with an ever-increasing load of crystallized superstition on your heads, for hundreds of years spending all your energy upon discussing the touchableness or untouchableness of this food or that, with all humanity crushed out of you by the continuous social tyranny of ages—what are you? ... Come, be men! Kick out the priests who are always against progress. ... Root out priestcraft first. Come, be men! Come out of your narrow holes and have a look abroad. See how nations are on the march. Do you love your country? Then, come, let us struggle for higher and better things; look not back, no, not even if you see the dearest and nearest cry. Look not back, but *forward! (ibid.*, pp. 63-64).

> 'India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men—men, mind, and not brutes. The English government has been the instrument brought over here by the Lord to break your crystallized civilization, and Madras supplied the first men who helped in giving the English a footing. How many men, unselfish, thoroughgoing men, is Madras ready now to supply, to struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things—sympathy for the poor and bread to their hungry mouths, enlightenment to the people at large—and struggle unto death to make men of them who have been brought to the level of beasts by the tyranny of your forefathers?' (*ibid.*, p. 64).

> 'A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified

with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising up—the gospel of equality.'

'No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism. The Lord has shown me that religion is not at fault, but it is the Pharisees and Sadducees in Hinduism, hypocrites, who invent all sorts of engines of tyranny in the shape of doctrines of *pāramārthika* and *vyāvahārika* (absolute and relative truth). . . . It is not their fault. They are children, yea, veritable children, though they be great and high in society. Their eyes see nothing beyond their little horizon of a few yards—the routine work, eating, drinking, earning, and begetting, following each other in mathematical precision. They know nothing beyond, happy little souls! Their sleep is never disturbed. Their nice little brown studies of lives never rudely shocked by the wail of woe, of misery, of degradation and poverty, that has filled the Indian atmosphere—the result of centuries of oppression. They little dream of the ages of tyranny—mental, moral, and physical—that has reduced the image of God to a mere beast of burden; the emblem of the Divine Mother, to a slave to bear children; and life itself, a curse. But there are others, who see, feel, and shed tears of blood in their hearts, who think that there is a remedy for it, and who are ready to apply this remedy at any cost, even to the giving up of life. And "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven".'(*ibid.*, pp. 68-70).

'The Hindu must not give up his religion, but must keep religion within its proper limits, and give freedom to society to grow. All the reformers in India made the serious mistake of holding religion accountable for all the horrors of priestcraft and degeneration, and went forthwith to pull down the indestructible structure, and what was the result? Failure! Beginning from Buddha down to Ram Mohan Roy, everyone made the mistake of holding caste to be a religious institution and tried to pull down religion and caste altogether, and failed. But in spite of all the ravings of the priests, caste is simply a crystallized social institution, which, after doing its service, is now filling the atmosphere of India with its stench, and it can only be removed by giving back to the people their lost social individuality. Every man born here (in U. S. A.) knows that he is a *man*. Every man born in India knows that he is a slave 'of society. Now, freedom is the only condition of growth; take that off, the result is degeneration. With the introduction of modern competition see how caste is disappearing fast! No religion is now necessary to kill it. The Brahmin shopkeeper, shoemaker, and wine-distiller are common in northern India. And why? Because of competition. No man is prohibited from doing anything he pleases for his livelihood under the present government, and the result is neck and neck competition, and thus thousands are seeking and finding the highest level they were born for, instead of vegetating at the bottom.' (*ibid.*, pp. 75-76).

'My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will be done by nature according to her laws. Work hard, be steady, and have faith in the Lord. Set to work, I am coming sooner or later. Keep the motto before you: "Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion."

'Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But alas! nobody ever did anything for them. Our modern reformers are very busy about widow remarriage. Of course, I am a sympathizer in every reform, but the fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but upon *the condition of the masses*. Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature? Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and we *will do it*. You are *all born to do it*. Have faith in yourselves, great convictions are the mothers of great deeds. Onward for ever! Sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death—this is our motto.' (*ibid*., pp. 83-84).

'This idea of wonderful liberality joined with eternal energy and progress must spread over India, it must electrify the whole nation and must enter the very pores of society, in spite of the horrible ignorance, spite, caste-feeling, old boobyism, and jealousy which are the heritage of this nation of slaves.' (*ibid*., p. 87).

'Social laws were created by economic conditions under the sanction of religion. The terrible mistake of religion was to interfere in social matters. But how hypocritically it says and thereby contradicts itself: "Social reform is not the business of religion"! True, what we want is that religion should not be a social reformer, but we insist at the same time that religion has no right to become a social law-giver. Hands off! Keep yourself to your own bounds and everything would come right.' (*ibid*., p. 90).

'The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. The poor in the West are devils; compared with them ours are angels, and it is therefore so much the easier to raise our poor. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality*. That is the great task between our people and princes (the state). Up to now nothing has been done in that direction. Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries, and at last the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. Give them ideas—that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature. Our duty is to put ideas into their heads, they will do the rest. This is what is to be done in India, (*ibid*., pp. 109-10).

'The present Hindu society is organized only for spiritual men, and hopelessly crushes out everybody else. Why? Where shall they go who want to enjoy the world a little with its frivolities? Just as our religion takes in all, so should our society. This is to be worked out by first understanding the true principles of our religion, and then applying them to society. This is the slow but sure work to be done'. (*ibid* ., p. 137).

'I do not believe in a religion or God which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth.' (*ibid.*, p. 141).

'To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and the degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom—whose foundation was hatred of others—round the nation, and the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindu from coming in contact with the surrounding Buddhistic nations.

'Whatever cloak ancient or modern sophistry may try to throw over it, the inevitable result—the vindication of the moral law, that none can hate others without degenerating himself—is that the race that was foremost amongst the ancient races is now a byword and a scorn among nations. We are object-lessons of the violation of that law which our ancestors were the first to discover and discriminate.

'Give and take is the law, and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life and hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races, and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life.

We must mix, therefore, with all the races of the earth. And every Hindu that goes out to travel in foreign parts renders more benefit to his country than hundreds of men who are bundles of superstitions and selfishness and whose one aim in life seems to be like that of the dog in the manger. The wonderful structures of national life which the Western nations have raised are supported by the strong pillars of character, and until we can produce numbers of such, it is useless to fret and fume against this or that power.' (*ibid., p. 150)*.

'I fully agree with the educated classes in India that a thorough overhauling of society is necessary. But how to do it? The destructive plans of reformers have failed. My plan is this: We have not done *badly* in the past; certainly not. Our society is not *bad* but *good*, only I want it to be better still. Not from error to truth, nor from bad to good; but from truth to higher truth, from good to better, best. I tell my countrymen that so far they have done well—now is the time to do better. Now take the case of caste, in Sanskrit *jāti*, *i.e.* species. Now this is the first idea of creation. Variation *(vičitratā)*, that is to say, *jāti*, means creation. "I am one, I become many" (various Vedas). Unity is before creation, diversity is creation. Now if this diversity stops, creation will be destroyed. So long as any species is vigorous and active it must throw out varieties. When it ceases or is stopped from breeding varieties, it dies. Now the original idea of *Jāti* was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, his *prakriti*, his *Jāti*, his caste, and so it remained for thousands of years. Not even in the latest books is interdining prohibited; nor in any of the older books is intermarriage forbidden. Then what was the cause of India's downfall? The giving up of *this* idea of caste. As the *Gitā* says, with the extinction of caste the world will be destroyed. Now does it seem true that with the stoppage of these variations the world will be destroyed? The present caste is not the real *jāti,* but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free action of *jāti,* i.e. caste or variation. Any crystallized custom or privilege or hereditary class in any shape really prevents caste (*jāti)* from having its full sway, and whenever any nation ceases to produce this immense variety, it must die.

'Therefore what I have to tell you, my countrymen, is this: that India fell because you prevented and abolished caste. Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and is not caste. Let *jāti* have its sway; break down every barrier in the way of caste, and we shall rise. Now look at Europe. When it succeeded in giving free scope to caste and took away most of the barriers that stood in the way of individuals—each developing his caste—Europe rose. In America, there is the best scope for caste (real *jāti*) to develop, and so the people are great. Every Hindu knows that astrologers try to fix the caste of every boy or girl as soon as he or she is born. That is the real caste, the individuality, and *jyotiṣ* recognized that. And we can only rise by giving it full sway again. This variety does not mean inequality nor any special privilege.'

'This is my method—to show the Hindus that they have to give up nothing but only to move on in the line laid down by the sages and shake off their inertia, the result of centuries of servitude. Of course, we had to stop advancing during the Mohammedan tyranny, for then it was not a question of progress but of life and death. Now that that pressure has gone, we must move forward, not on the lines of destruction directed by renegades and missionaries, but along our own line—our own road. *Everything is hideous because the building is unfinished.* We had to stop building during centuries of oppression. Now finish the building and everything will look beautiful in its own place. This is all my plan. I am thoroughly convinced of this. Each nation has a main current in life; in India it is religion. Make it strong and the waters on either side must move along with it. This is one phase of my line of thought.' (*ibid.* pp. 191-93).

'My Master used to say that these names as Hindu, Christian, etc. stand as great bars to all brotherly feelings between man and man. We must try to break them down first. They have lost all their good powers and now only stand as baneful influences under whose black magic even the best of us behave like demons. Well, we have to work hard and must succeed.

'That is why I desire so much to have a centre. Organization has its faults, no doubt, but without that nothing can be done. And here, I am afraid, I will have to differ from you—that no one ever succeeded in keeping society in good humour and at the same time did great works. One must work as the dictate comes from within, and then if it is right amd good, society is bound to veer round, perhaps centuries after one is dead and gone. We must plunge heart and soul and body into the work. And until we be ready to sacrifice everything else to one idea and to one alone, we never, never will see the light.

'Those that want to help mankind must take their own pleasure and pain, name and fame, and all sorts of interests, and make a bundle of them and throw them into the sea, and then come to the Lord. This is what all the masters said *and did.*' (*ibid.*, p. 211).

'Do you mean to say I am born to live and die one of those caste-ridden, superstitious, merciless, hypocritical, atheistic *cowards* that you find among the educated Hindus? I hate cowardice, I will have nothing to do with cowards or political nonsense. I do not believe in any politics. God and truth are the only politics in the world, everything else is trash.' (*ibid.*, p. 243).

'What I mean by mentioning all this is that there were many good things in ancient times, but there were bad things too. The good things are to be retained, but the India that is to be, the future India, must be much greater than ancient India. From the day Sri Ramakrishna was born dates the growth of modern India and of the Golden Age. And you are the agents to bring about this Golden Age. To work, with this conviction at heart!' (*ibid.*, p. 252).

'From the day when education and culture etc. began to spread gradually from patricians to plebeians, grew the distinction between the modern civilization as of Western countries and the ancient civilization as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc. I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolizing of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, i.e. by spreading education among the masses.'. (*ibid.*, p. 367).

9. *The Impact of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda on Modern India*

What was the result of Vivekananda's handling of the Indian tradition? Quoting several stirring passages from Vivekananda's *Lectures from Colombo to Almora,* Romain Rolland remarks (*Life of Vivekananda*, pp. 124-25):

'Imagine the thunderous reverberations of these words! The reader almost says with the Indian masses and with Vivekananda himself:

'Śiva! … Śiva!''

'The storm passed; it scattered its cataracts of water and fire over the plain, and its formidable appeal to the Force of the Soul, to the God sleeping in man and His illimitable possibilities! I can see the Mage erect, his arm raised, like Jesus above the tomb of Lazarus in Rembrandt's engraving: with energy flowing from his gesture of command to raise the dead and bring him to life. …

'From that day the awakening of the torpid Colossus began. If the generation that followed saw, three years after Vivekananda's death, the revolt of Bengal, the prelude to the great movement of Tilak and Gandhi, if India today has definitely taken part in the collective action of organized masses, it is due to the initial shock, to the mighty

"Lazarus, Come forth!"

of the message from Madras'.

Again (*ibid.*, 316-17):

> 'So India was hauled out of the shifting sands of barren speculation wherein she had been engulfed for centuries, by the hand of one of her own *sannyāsins;* and the result was that the whole reservoir of mysticism, sleeping beneath, broke its bounds, and spread by a series of great ripples into action. The West ought to be aware of the tremendous energies liberated by this means. The world finds itself face to face with an awakening India. ... Whatever the part played in this reawakening by the three generations of trumpeters during the previous century (the greatest of whom we salute, the precursor; Ram Mohan Roy), the decisive call was the trumpet blast of the lectures delivered at Colombo and Madras. And the magic watchword was unity. Unity of every Indian, man and woman (and world-unity as well); of all the powers of the spirit; dream and action, reason, love and work. Unity of the hundred races of India with their hundred different tongues and hundred thousand gods. ... Unity of the thousand sects of Hinduism. Unity within the vast ocean of all religious thought and all rivers past and present, Western and Eastern'.

Dealing with the spiritual source of modern India's social adjustment, through the activation of the *Śruti* content of its tradition, Rolland continues (*ibid.*, pp. 317-18):

> 'This "greater India", this new India—whose growth politicians and learned men have, ostrich fashion, hidden from us and whose striking effects are now apparent—is impregnated with the soul of Ramakrishna. The twin star of the Paramahamsa and the hero who translated his thought into action dominates and guides her present destinies. Its warm radiance is the leaven working within the soil of India and fertilizing it. The present leaders of India: the king of thinkers, the king of poets, and the Mahatma—Aurobindo Ghose, Tagore, and Gandhi—have grown, flowered, and borne fruit under the double constellation of the Swan and the Eagle—a fact publicly acknowledged by Aurobindo and Gandhi'.

The Indian tradition was fortunate to have a leader and innovator of the spiritual stature and credentials of Swami Vivekananda. Speaking about the impact of Vivekananda on Indian life and thought, Jawaharlal Nehru says (*Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda,* p. 4):

> 'I do not know how many of the younger generation read the speeches and the writings of Swami Vivekananda. But I can tell you that many of my generation were very powerfully influenced by him and I think it would do a great deal of good to the present generation if they also went through Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, and they would learn much from them.'

Referring to the contemporary relevance of Vivekananda's ideas, he says (*ibid.*, p. 5):

> 'If you read Swami Vivekananda's writings and speeches, the curious thing you will feel is that they are not old. It was told 56 years ago, and they are fresh today, because what he wrote or spoke about dealt with certain fundamental matters and aspects of our problems or the world's problems.'

Speaking further about Vivekananda's influence on Indian politics, he says *(ibid.,* pp. 6-7):

> 'He was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word and yet he was, I think, one of the great founders—if you like you may use any other word—of the national movement of India, and a great number of people who took more or less an active part in that movement in a later date drew their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. Directly or indirectly, he has powerfully influenced the India of today. And I think that our younger generation will take advantage of this fountain of wisdom, of spirit, and fire that flows through Swami Vivekananda.'

Swami Vivekananda educated the Indian mind to discriminate between the essentials and the non-essentials of the national tradition, and to welcome and assimilate the modern forces of progress. This form of social education in a country like India can be done effectively only by a towering spiritual personality. Says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan *(Speeches and Writings,* Vol. II, p. 191):

> 'Swami Vivekananda's life and teachings have prepared us for the new age of freedom in which we live. They tell us how best we can consolidate the freedom we have won.'

The fruits of this spiritual education of a whole people can be seen in the impressive achievements of India during the last sixty years in the field of fundamental social reform. Many of these reforms, such as removal of untouchability, opening of temples to the Harijans, reform and codification of Hindu law, ignoring of caste by the Indian constitution as a factor in inter-group relationships, breaking down of caste barriers, and even creed and race barriers, with respect to eating and marriage, and disappearance of opposition to sea voyage and foreign travel, are radical measures. Many of these are legal enactments backed by enlightened public opinion. They never gave rise to social conflicts, in spite of their radical impact on the old tradition; they helped, on the other hand, in the growth and renewal of that tradition.

The awakening of the Indian women and their rise to positions of the highest responsibility is another striking aspect of this peaceful evolution and growth of the Indian tradition in the modern age.

It is noteworthy that, unlike several Western countries, India did not experience a feminist movement; the significance of this fact lies in the way it reveals the social wisdom of the Indian tradition. *It is when a world-view goes counter to the claims and aspirations of women, and men uphold that world-view as against the spirit of the times, that a feminist movement takes place.* This is the experience of modern Western history. But in India, men came forward to uphold the claims of women and move with the times; and in this they were sustained as much by the spiritual constituents of the Indian tradition as by the recent orientation of that tradition by Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

The absence of opposition in India to social reform measures such as family planning, as noted by international study groups, is another instance of the adaptive character of the Indian tradition.

The Indian Constitution, with its broad democratic frame and egalitarian objective, bears the touch of the wisdom and broad outlook of the Indian tradition and its capacity for assimilation. And the healthy functioning of democracy in India, and the success of its three general elections, involving over 200 million voters, the most stupendous democratic phenomenon in the world today, is another fruit of the vitality and wisdom of the national tradition.

10. *Need for a Balanced Outlook between the Ancient and the Modern*

Technological advance is bound to affect profoundly and recast in a revolutionary way our culture and tradition. But it will be only its peripheral aspects that will be so affected. And, thanks to the education received by the nation from its great spiritual and social leaders like Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi, this recasting of the peripheral aspects will not only cause no concern, but will cause only satisfaction, to enlightened Indian minds. *But there is imperative need to stress the validity and relevance of the central aspects of our tradition, if the fast-coming peripheral changes are not to blow away the whole tradition itself.* This is where the role of national education comes in. *The nation needs to be continually educated in the abiding spiritual constituents of its tradition.* As Vinoba Bhave and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru have been expounding it in recent years, science must be combined with spirituality; or Vedanta is to be coupled with modern science, as Vivekananda long ago expressed it in his formulation of the content of Indian education.

Spirituality is the positive content of the Indian tradition; it is its undying constituent. The Upaniṣads are its fountain-source. The *Iśa* is one of the oldest of these Upaniṣads. It has been a source of deep inspiration to Indian thinkers and seekers in ancient and modern times. It asks man to feel the pulsations of the Divine in life and nature, and enjoy with zest the full life span of a hundred years through renunciation. *Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthāḥ*— 'Enjoy through renunciation'—is its watchword. This idea was later developed by the *Gita* into a comprehensive and practical spirituality, in its theory of detached action. Renunciation becomes joyous when it leads to higher levels of being and purer forms of delight. This positive concept of renunciation is the central concept of ethics, of *dharma*, in Indian thought. This dynamic teaching of practical spirituality has tremendous consequences for man and society; for the emphasis here is on character, leading to universality of vision, on the one side, and social efficiency, on the other. Life is viewed in a context of progress, development, realization, with the infinitude of being as the target of achievement. This man-making message was communicated to our country by Swami Vivekananda in a brief statement of national educational policy (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 228):

> 'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself.'

Since political independence, our national leaders have taken much pains to criticize again and again the negative features of the Indian tradition. One of the targets of attack has been Hindu communalism. There is no doubt that there are some narrow-minded communalists among the Hindus. But that *such narrow communalism is not a prominent characteristic of the Hindu people as a whole, or of their tradition, is proved by the fact that even the shock of partition of the country on communal grounds did not result in the Hindu community voting for a Hindu communal state in India*, and that behind the broad secular constitution of the nation is the sustenance and support of the broad masses and enlightened sections of the Hindu community. The spirit of inclusiveness of the Hindu tradition is fully evident here; and we cannot but recall what Swami Vivekananda said on the subject of the Hindu tradition while addressing the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, p.3):

> 'I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance.'

Casteism and untouchability have also been constantly exposed with a view to ridding India of these evils and making democracy a living reality. The public have received, through these and other criticisms by our national leaders, a measure of social education, which is very valuable; but, unfortunately, this educational process has been one-sided; it has exposed only the faults and foibles of the Indian tradition without directing the people's mind to the positive and permanent constituents of this tradition. This has resulted in creating an impression in the people, especially in the youth, that their country's tradition is mostly obsolete and that there is nothing in it worth preserving. *This has had, and is having, a highly deleterious effect on the national mind, national character, and work efficiency, by undermining its faith in the nation's legacy and, consequently, weakening its ability and strength to assimilate the best in the modern heritage.*

This has to be corrected by our education. A negative education is worse than death, said Swami Vivekananda. Education should acquaint the people with the life-giving, abiding, positive elements of the Indian tradition; this alone will help to forge a spiritually and socially efficient national character. *In this field, the importance of Vivekananda literature in toning up and invigorating our education cannot be overestimated.*

None had criticized the faults and foibles of the Indian tradition more vehemently than Vivekananda; but he did not stop with mere criticism and exposure. He also held before the people the glorious and imperishable, the pure and positive, constituents of their national tradition, and also showed the way of enriching the national tradition by assimilation of the tested values of the modern experience.

The progressive adaptation of the Hindu tradition to the requirements of the modern age and the liberation of its universal spiritual values, will also help in the realization of a similar integration by the Islamic, Christian, Parsee, and other great traditions of India. They will also learn to shed the parochial and the outworn elements of their traditions, and liberate their universal and human contents. *It is only thus that the process of nation-building in India will be consummated, and a free, egalitarian, spiritually oriented body-politic provided for Indian's undying soul.*

11. *Objectives of Our Education: What They Ought to be*

Our educational vision has to grasp the whole of India as a perennial laboratory for the achievement of human integration. Her immense variety and diversity, natural as well as human, which she has studiously fostered, form the data for its science of man and society. Based on the universal concept of man's divinity, she achieved in the past a measure of cultural unity and human integration which has stood firm against many a political cataclysm of long or short durations. The legacy so left is our starting-point. It has now to be enriched extensively as well as intensively, both within India as well as outside. This is very much facilitated by the world conditions created by the modern technological civilization. *A nation's educational policy, like its political policy, gets added dynamism and direction when to its domestic policy is added a foreign policy content as well.* The spiritually liberated man is the aim of Indian education: *Yā vidyā sā vimuktaye*— 'That is knowledge which liberates'; and it was of this Indian educational vision that Rabindranath Tagore sang in a famous passage of his *Gītāñjali* (35):

> Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high:
> Where knowledge is free;
> Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
> Where words come out from the depth of truth;
> Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
> Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
> Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening

thought and action—
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Swami Vivekananda defines education as the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Similarly, he defines religion as the manifestation of the divinity already in man. Religion, according to him, is also a process of education; in fact, it becomes continued education. This synoptic view finds eloquent expression in one of his oft-quoted passages (*Complete Works,* Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p.124):

> 'Each soul is potentially divine; the goal is to manifest this Divine within by controlling nature, external as well as internal.'

This is his concept of complete education in which man achieves social welfare by the mastery of the external environment through scientific, technological, and socio-political efficiency, and he achieves spiritual enrichment by the mastery of his inner life through religion.

12. *Conclusion:*

Education so defined should place before itself clear objectives, if it is to find expression in practical measures of implementation. In the light of all that has been discussed above, we can discern six objectives for our education:

1. The training of our children to an appreciation of our nation's cultural heritage and to equıp them with the desire and the capacity to enhance the same and leave to posterity a richer legacy.

2. The training of our children in talents and capacities by which they become productive units of society and the source of its economic strength.

3. The equipment of our children with the qualities of courage and vision to protect our newly won national freedom, to preserve its democratic structure, function, and liberties, and to carry the same to ever wider fields and ever higher levels.

4. The training of our children in virtues and graces that will make them emotionally stable individuals and enable them to live in peace, harmony, and co-operation with their fellow citizens.

5. The training of our children in virtues and graces that will make

them international in their outlook and sympathies, and enable them to live in peace, harmony, and co-operation with the emerging world community.

6. The training of our children to an awareness of the spiritual and trans-social dimension of the human personality, and to a converging life-endeavour in the realization of this fact in and through life and action.

It is only thus that our education will become a fit discipline to help to continue the march of the Indian tradition from an impressive past to a glorious future.

3

EDUCATION FOR MAN-MAKING*

1. *Introduction*

I AM coming here to participate in this morning's function by a strange coincidence of good fortune. I came to Calcutta last morning from Delhi on my way to the Andaman Islands on a week's lecture tour, and I was anxious to visit this institution; since I could not come here during my last Calcutta visit a month ago, I decided to avail of this visit to come to this Home and meet its Secretary, Swami Punyanandaji, with whom I had intimate association in this field of the Ramakrishna Mission work in Rangoon twenty years ago. When I asked over the phone this morning about his convenience, he merely said: 'You come straightaway; we have a function here; and you will also join it.' Thus I am here with you all this morning. And I am happy to find that it is a very auspicious occasion when you are having something like a Convocation of the Basic Training School section of this vast and varied educational institution. And Swami Punyanandaji has asked me to speak a few words at this farewell function. I do so gladly.

2. *Modern India's Search for an Adequate Educational Philosophy and Programme*

You have all completed your Basic Education Training Course and will soon be leaving for your respective fields of work. What is this training for? What does the nation expect from you all? What is the philosophy and technique which, if you adopt, will help you to respond to the nation's demands on you? I shall join with you today in asking these questions and seeking their answers.

From April to August 1961, I was on a four-month lecture tour of seventeen European countries, including the Soviet Union, Poland, Spain, and Czechoslovakia. Moving through those countries, seeing their prosperity and general human welfare, and the sterling social virtues behind these achievements, I became convinced of the importance of an education—intellectual, technical, and, most important of all, social—which will help our people to develop those national traits which have made these Western nations great and progressive. This was the feeling that Swami Vivekananda had when he visited the Western countries. We have inherited a great culture and tradition, and we have also produced many great saints and sages who are really international in their stature. But yet, as a people, we have failed to develop those traits of character and social awareness which alone can make for general welfare and happiness through a wide diffusion of intelligence and efficiency among the people. Swami Vivekananda saw in the Western people tremendous energy, self-discipline, efficiency, the spirit of social awareness, and co-operation. These are the virtues that will help us to build our society into a pattern of physical and mental health. He saw these things lacking in India. Jealousy, self-centredness, love of ease, utter lack of social awareness and work-efficiency, and too much talking and too little working, these traits of the Indian national character of his time pained Swami Vivekananda. And in his letters and speeches he has given expression to this anguish of his heart and the remedy for these ills. And he discovered that remedy in education and more education.

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*Address to the trainees of the Senior Basic School of the Ramakrishna Mission Boys Home, Rahara, West Bengal, on 9 January 1962

Our Indian children were getting education in his time, both school and college education. But he did not consider that as education at all. For he found it lacking in that essential content of character-building orientation which alone converts education, in his view, into a man-making and nation-building process. So he dreamt of the day when India would be able, freed from foreign control, to frame her own educational programme, keeping in view this high objective of the all-round development of the nation. He considered man-making to be the end and aim of all education. He has given many ideas on this subject of man-making education and man-making religion. This makes his literature an unfailing source of inspiration to everyone who wants to dedicate his energies to the service of his country, more especially in the field of education. And he placed education as the most important national activity for free India. To the question, have our women any problems at all, the Swami replied (*Complete Works,* Vol. V, Seventh Edition, p. 231):

'Of course, they have many and grave problems, but none that are not to be solved by that magic word "education".'

This applied equally to the problems of men as well. Such was the faith of Vivekananda in education as the one solvent of the problems of our ancient society. Since his passing away in 1902, our country has been trying to evolve a system of education on national lines and suited to the national purposes. Great thinkers have entered this field and contributed their thoughts and the fruits of their experiments to the nation. We have Tagore's experiments, we have of course Gandhiji's great experiments, we have the Ramakrishna Mission's experiments, as well as many other individual experiments in various parts of the country.

3. *Importance of Stress on Labour in Education*

Since independence, the nation has been trying to unify and channelize all these various insights on the subject of education into constructive policies and programmes: today, we witness a steady emergence of some sort of a broad policy and programme for the nation's education. It is not yet clear and precise; it is still in the experimental stage. But certain broad features of this educational programme and policy are visible on the horizon. The most important feature of this body of educational insights is that which forms the fundamental principle in the Basic Education programme. This programme contains within itself the basic ingredient of what Swami Vivekananda called man-making education. *That basic ingredient is the emphasis on work*, labour of the hand in association with labour of the intellect; such a combination will produce intelligent, socially efficient individuals, unlike the usual academic intellectual education, which turns out only individuals with information stocked in their brain, but without the capacity for practical expression. Knowledge gained through life and work, through experiment and investigation, is alone vigorous and fruitful, especially in the early stages. A mere intellectual education is valid only in the higher educational levels.

The emphasis upon work, upon the labour of the hand, is there in the educational systems of many modern states. I was particularly struck by this emphasis upon work, upon constructive enterprise on the part of children which I found in the educational system of Soviet Russia. During the last few years, the whole world has become impressed by the achievements of the Soviet educational system, a system which has produced so many fruits of human achievements in the form of science and technology, economic development, and general human welfare. These soviet educational achievements hold vital lessons for us in India today. We have learnt much from the British educational system; we have also tried to learn a little from the American educational system, a process which is getting intensified today as a result of increasingly closer cultural contacts with America after our independence; but we have now the opportunity to study at first hand, and benefit from the impressive educational experiment of Soviet Russia, in the wake of the newly forged Indo-Soviet cultural and economic collaboration. Thus learning from every nation the beautiful points in its system, and fusing them with our own national vision and purpose, we have to evolve an educational scheme for our country which will meet the demands of the modern age.

This emphasis upon labour is central to the Russian educational system; the joy with which the children of U. S. S. R. work and produce articles of beauty and utility in the process of acquiring knowledge and ideas makes the knowledge so acquired dynamic and creative. This element of joy in work and study which I witnessed in the institution I visited during my all-too brief eight days' sojourn in the Soviet Union last August impressed me greatly. And it is not only the students who experience this joy, but the teachers as well. Both feel a sense of joy and pride in the achievements of their country. In fact, this sense of pride and joy is characteristic of not merely the Russian teacher and pupil, but also the Russian worker, the Russian industrial executive, the Russian administrator, in fact, of every element in the Soviet society.

I found in all of them a sense of pride in the creation of something unique and valuable for man everywhere through the experiments in their Soviet society; everyone is inspired by the vision of a new humanity freed from hunger, disease, social injustice, exploitation, and war. When I asked the Director of the Central Station of Young Naturalists in Moscow to explain the work and aims of his

Station, he turned round to explain to me the activities and achievements of his institution with a rare fund of enthusiasm and pride, and spoke highly of the young trainees who flock to him year after year. Faith in oneself and in one's fellowmen, love of work, pride in the nation's achievements, and hope for the future of man everywhere are the characteristic traits of the average Soviet citizen today.

4. *The Chhāndogya Upaniṣad on Work Efficiency*

Now, when we turn to our own country, one of the things that strikes us is a lack of this sense of purpose, this sense of direction, this sense of enthusiasm in the work that we do. Swami Vivekananda had told us that national work should be suffused with national vision and enthusiasm and a spirit of joy. Otherwise, all work, he said, would become static, stereotyped, and meaningless, and a source not of freedom but of bondage. Whether it is teaching or learning, whether it is the simple household duties or the larger duties of government and administration, what we need to capture in every sphere of life is this national purpose and enthusiasm. Our country has become free after centuries of political and social immobilization; it has now got the opportunity to build the structure of an enduring society on the basis of justice and equality, human dignity and unity, inspired by the vision of general human happiness and welfare. Swami Vivekananda exhorted the youth of the country to be up and doing to achieve this goal. It was not the time to sleep, he said, nor to waste time in idle talk, but to work intelligently, moved by the spirit of love of man; for 'on our work depends the India of the future', said he.

I would request you to keep this idea constantly in your minds. Inspired by this vision and idea, whatever work you do, little or big, in any nook or corner of India, will have telling effect on the march of India to prosperity and progress. It is the cumulative result of such work by millions of dedicated men and women that creates a nation. Swamiji gave us this national vision—this vision which imparts a sense of urgency, a sense of sacredness, to the work that we do. Every citizen must be imbued with the sense of a mission, a sense of faith in his own work. The work that is done with faith, the work that is done with an awareness of the worth of one's contribution to the making of the nation, that work becomes most effective. In our *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad,* written nearly three or four thousand years ago, we find this definition of work efficiency (I. 1.10):

Yadeva vidyayā karoti, śraddhayā, upaniṣadā, tadeva vīryavattaraṁ bhavati—

'Whatever work is done with *vidyā*, knowledge, through *śraddha*, faith, and backed by *upaniṣad,* meditation, that alone becomes most effective.'

Vidyā, knowledge, is necessary, knowledge of the methods and techniques of work, of the theoretical and practical aspects of a subject. But this knowledge will remain static until it is energized by *śraddha*. And that energy needs to be disciplined and properly directed by *upaniṣad,* calm meditation. Any work which has these three sources of strength behind it will be most efficient. It alone will have world-moving power. Our country needs work of this type today in every department of national activity.

All creative work belongs to this category. You are here to receive training in Basic Education. Every work requires a prior training of the worker. He needs to know the pros and cons of the work so that he does it intelligently. There is thus need for the training and discipline that you undergo here for a year. What is Basic Education? What are you expected to do in this field? What are the methods and processes of this particular educational scheme? You learn these things for a year here. That is the first equipment —*vidyā*, knowledge. The second equipment is *śraddhā,* faith. No one can impart a training in this to another person. Everyone has to capture it for himself or herself. *Śraddhā* is a spiritual value; when it moves a human heart, the man or woman concerned finds an intrinsic value in life and its activities, not to be equated with the monetary rewards or physical and mental pleasures that accompany them. True work is an expression of the human personality. It is the richness of the personality of the worker that imparts an artistic quality to his life and work. And this inner richness is the product of *śraddhā*. Faith in oneself, in the Divine within, is the greatest source of enrichment of a personality. Such a person works out of the fullness of his heart. By capturing this *śraddhā,* man achieves the true purposes of education; without it, the first equipment, namely, knowledge, does not shine, cannot become fruitful. Swami Vivekananda again and again referred to the importance of this value in education. Without *śraddhā* no great things can be done, said he. Modern Europeans and Americans have achieved great things because they had *śraddhā*. We lost the battle for national existence and freedom during the last few centuries because we lost *śraddhā*. Swamiji, therefore, placed this value at the centre of his national education programme. The greatness of a man is the greatness of his *śraddhā*. *Śraddhāmayoyaṁ puruṣo yo yat śraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ*—'Man consists of *śraddhā*. Whatever be the measure of his *śraddha,* that will be the measure of his life as well', says the *Gītā* (XVII. 3). Hence Swamiji wanted us to acquire this *śraddhā,* this deep faith in oneself, so that we may develop into dynamic characters.

5. *Vivekananda on Need for Ātma-Śraddhā*

In his reply to the Address of Welcome given by the citizens of Calcutta on his return from the West in February 1897, Swami Vivekananda said (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 319-20):

> 'What we want is this *śraddhā*. Unfortunately it has nearly vanished from India, and this is why we are in our present state. What makes the difference between man and man is the difference in this *śraddhā* and nothing else. What makes one man great and another weak and low is this *śraddhā*. My master used to say, he who thinks himself weak will become weak, and this is true. This *śraddhā* must enter into you. Whatever of material power you see manifested by the Western races is the outcome of this *śraddhā,* because they believe in their muscles, and if you believe in your spirit, how much more will it work! Believe in that infinite soul, the infinite power, which, with consensus of opinion, your books and sages preach. ... Therefore, this *śraddhā.* is what I want, and what all of us here want, this faith in ourselves, and before you is the great task to get that faith. Give up that awful disease that is creeping into our national blood, that idea of ridiculing everything, that loss of seriousness. Give that up. Be strong, and have this *śraddhā,* and everything else is bound to follow'.

Swamiji was not much impressed by our profuse faith in gods and goddesses; there was no strength and vigour in that faith, because it was not backed by *ātmaśradhā,* faith in oneself. So he admonished us to have faith in oneself first before having faith in God.

It is only when we have real faith in ourselves, when our hearts pulsate with this burning faith, it is only then that our faith in God will shine. We had plenty of faith in gods and goddesses; yet our country remained broken, repeatedly subjected to all sorts of foreign tyranny; it has remained poor, backward, and weak all these centuries. But now, as the result of the teachings by men like Swami Vivekananda, we are gaining a bit of that *śraddhā* in ourselves. We are developing that kind of *ātmaśraddhā,* and the nation is moving onward. A new social awareness, a new spirit of earnestness and enthusiasm, came to our people in the wake of his teachings, and in a few decades we achieved our political independence. Only by cultivating the same virtues still more intensively can we hope to solve the social, economic, and other problems of our ancient country.

6. *Efficiency : Full versus Partial*

Efficiency is a value that is being discussed from various angles in modern industrial society; there is constant effort to find out and evolve methods designed to make workers in all fields of society more and more efficient. One important source of this efficiency, apart from knowledge of techniques, is the worker's deep faith in himself, and deep faith in the cause for which he is working. A labourer is working in a factory. Ordinarily, he works to earn his own living; his efficiency then will be that much only as would keep him in the job, and often, much less. But when he learns that the work he does has a larger bearing on the good of society, on the happiness and welfare of millions, he becomes more efficient; that awareness taps a new energy source in him, his higher Self, faith in which brings faith in his work for the good of other men. A student's study becomes more efficient when he keeps bright before his mind the individual and social objectives of that study. The same is the case with regard to the teacher and his work. This *śraddhā* must be captured by our people today. We are not called to hard work today to enrich a master, native or foreign. We work to uplift ourselves, our nation as a whole. If our workers, industrial executives, and citizens need this *śraddhā* today, our teachers need it a hundredfold more. Because, while the former handle only machines and tools, the teacher handles living persons like himself in his students. He has to impart manliness to them by evoking their *śarddhā* in themselves. That means that the teacher must have a fund of *śraddhā* within himself. He will then be a light kindling other lights. This is how ancient India understood the teacher's role in education.

Thus the second value, *śraddhā,* is more important than the first one, *vidyā,* which remains sterile without the touch of the second. The Upaniṣad was not content with these two values, and so added a third value—*upaniṣad,* which means calm meditation. Action is of the body; knowledge is of the mind; *śraddhā* proceeds from the heart. The flow of the energy of man from faith (*śraddhā*), through *vidyā* (knowledge), to *karma* (action), is the basis of efficiency. This flow of energy has to be maintained. It often suffers shut-downs due to the ups and downs in the emotional life of the worker. Inner disintegration or want of integration results in outer disorganization and lowering of personality tone and efficiency. With this, all work efficiency becomes partial efficiency, not total. This has to be prevented. The personality should be provided with a built-in mechanism for automatic integrations and adjustments. This is achieved, says the Upaniṣad, through the technique of meditation. The worker and his work must be fortified by meditation, by diving into the ocean of strength, fearlessness, and resource which is his inner Self, the Ātman.

Thus every work achieves full and total efficiency only when inspired by these three values of knowledge, faith, and meditation. What a blessed insight has been bequeathed for man by the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad,* in this great utterance: *Yadeva, vidyayā Karoti, śraddhayā, upanisadā tadeva viryavattaram bhavati!*

7. *Education as Teacher-Student Communion of Minds*

As I said earlier, this type of efficiency is expected most from the teacher. For teaching is not instructing, but communicating. In teaching, the personality of the teacher is in communion with those of his students. Mere instruction does not need the services of a teacher today; it can be had through books, through notes, through radio, television, and even through the tape-record. A good deal of such instruction is being given today through such media. Such instruction is nothing more than conveyance of idea as from A to B. But education is not mere instruction; it is not just conveyance of ideas and information from one person to another, or from an instrument to a person. Education involves the play of the personality force. Ideas and information become alive and vital when touched by that force. What is then conveyed is not static information but a force, an inspiration. That can come only from a teacher—a living, pulsating person. Education is vital communication; it is communion of minds. Swami Vivekananda refers to this in his lecture on 'My Master' delivered in New York in 1896. Says he (*Complete Works*. Vol. IV, Eighth Edition, pp. 177-78):

> 'He alone teaches who has something to give, for teaching is not talking, teaching is not imparting doctrines, it is communicating. Spirituality can be communicated just as really as I can give you a flower. This is true in the most literal sense. ... Therefore, first make character—that is the highest duty you can perform. Know Truth for yourself, and there will be many to whom you can teach it afterwards; they will all come. This was the attitude of my Master ... For it is not what is spoken, much less the language in which it is spoken, but it is the personality of the speaker which dwells in everything he says that carries weight. Every one of us feels this at times. We hear most splendid orations, most wonderfully reasoned out discourses, and we go home and forget them all. At other times we hear a few words in the simplest language, and they enter into our lives, become part and parcel of ourselves, and produce lasting results. The words of a man who can put his personality into them take effect, but he must have tremendous personality. All teaching implies giving and taking, the teacher gives and the taught receives, but one must have something to give, and the other must be open to receive.'

Indian education today must take note of the deep and inspiring sentiments in the above utterance of Swami Vivekananda. Teachers and students in India must strive to make education a communion of minds and enrichment of personalities and not, as defined by an American critic (*National Parent-Teacher Journal*, April 1955):

> 'That mysterious process whereby information passes from the lecture notes of the professor on to the notebook of the student, through his pen, without entering the mind of either'!

8. *Our Education and Our Democracy*

Our education must serve to further the aims of our democracy. We have to educate our children to be citizens of a democratic social order. They have to learn to live as free and equal men and women in a free and egalitarian society. No domination, no exploitation, no special privilege over others, but only the spirit of service shall be the motive force in inter-personal relationships. Education is the only means by which such a revolutionary change can be effected in our society which is still feudal in outlook, if not in structure. Even many of our so-called educated people are feudal in their mental make-up; they have not captured the spirit of freedom and equality in their relations with their fellowmen: many of our educated men exhibit the feudal outlook even in their relations with their educated wives. Citizens with feudal outlooks and feudal attitudes are tremendous sources of weakness for a democratic state which India is, and a democratic society which India hopes to be. This weakness has to be eradicated by educating all sections of our people in the robust democratic temper. All citizens, irrespective of their functions in society, are equal in their worth and dignity. Here the Vedantic and the modern democratic ideals of man mingle and converge. Swami Vivekananda's teachings on education and religion have this end in view.

Basic Education has been conceived in the light of this social objective. It represents not only a new method of education, but also a new philosophy of life. To quote the words of Gandhiji, the architect of the scheme:

> 'The ultimate objective of this New Education is not only a balanced and harmonious individual, but also a balanced and harmonious society—a just social order in which there is no unnatural dividing line between the haves and have-nots, and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right to freedom.'

9. *Conclusion*

Children imbibing these values from their earliest schooling years will, when grown up, become hard-working, co-operative, and peaceful citizens, worthy to become members not only of their own Indian society, but also of the emerging world community.

4

WOMEN IN INDIAN CULTURE*

1. *Introduction*

IT was a delightful experience for me today to enter the premises of this Home Science College and to partcipate in your prayer in its beautiful Sri Ramakrishna Temple. As Mrs. Rajammal Devadas, your Principal, said in her introductory remarks, I had been hearing about this college from her and from Sri Avinashilingam, its donor, for the past two or three years; but when I actually see it today, its dimension is far above my highest expectations. This beautiful campus, with its peace and quiet, is a home in the real Hindu sense, from where will radiate its noble message of a healthy, efficient, and peaceful home to all parts of our country through you and those who come after you to receive education here. The institution is an expression of Sri Avinashilingam's reverence for Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother and for Indian womanhood. Those who study here are certainly fortunate. Girls from all parts of India and outside come here to get not only an academic education, but also nourishing food for the soul. I have seen and addressed a few Home Science colleges, but this one is unique among them; here is present the one essential element of an Indian Home Science college, a pervading spiritual atmosphere, the brooding of the Divine Spirit over the troubled waters of life.

2. *Woman : The focus of Peace in the Home*

It is the atmosphere of peace that makes a home a real home. In a Home Science college, the most important aspect is the provision of an education which will help our women to run peaceful, efficient happy homes. What is a home without the spirit of love and dedication pervading its activities and processes? That spirit is centred in the housewife or mother. We have the ancient saying that it is not the building that makes the home, but it is the wife, the mother, the woman who has found peace in her heart, that constitutes the home;

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* Address delivered at the Avinashilingam Home Science College, Coimbatore, on 27 June 1970, at the inaugural function of the Students Union of the College

Nagṛham ityahuḥ, gṛhiṇī gṛham ucyate (Mahābhārata, Bhandarkar Institute Edition, Book XII, Chapter 142, footnote). She is the living goddess functioning in the household. Our culture has upheld the type of woman who encompasses the whole family with her pure love. In modern times you find beautiful palatial buildings, but inside them often live the most unhappy men and women. They may use many articles to beautify their houses, but there may not be any beauty or orderliness in their lives. Tension abides in their hearts instead of peace. This type is on the increase in modern civilization. The subject that is much discussed in an advanced country like America today is the subject of tensions—tensions intrapersonal, interpersonal, and international.

The essence of all beauty is harmony. In an age like this, we are given many suggestions as to how to make the home look more beautiful through interior decoration and other measures. But the fundamental thing about making the home beautiful is to bring peace to the home. This can be brought about only by religion. Just as the food we take gives us strength and the knowledge we acquire gives nourishment to our minds, in like manner do we gain spiritual nourishment through the thought of God. But modern education is practically devoid of this nourishment. There is urgent need to tackle the problem of this malnutrition of the soul. It is the main aim of this institution to see that all students who study here develop physically, mentally, and spiritually, and, through them this nourishment will be carried to hundreds of homes in the country.

How does this institution propose to give the students this spiritual nourishment? That is the function of the beautiful Sri Ramakrishna temple in the campus; this temple is the soul of this institution. 'The life of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is the life of religion in practice; his life enables us to see God face to face', writes Mahatma Gandhi in his 'Foreword' to the *Life of Sri Ramakrishna.* I was deeply impressed by the atmosphere in the temple when I attended your daily morning prayer just a few minutes ago. Through such prayers, one gets an experience of the intangible values of life, a communion with the deeper levels of our being.

3. *The Great Women of our past History*

The name of this campus itself is Saradalaya, a name associated with that symbol of purity and holiness, Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother. The students and staff of this institution have thus a double source of inspiration behind them, namely, Sri Ramakrishna and Sarada Devi. You will have occasion, during your stay here and later, to study the life of the Holy Mother. Swami Vivekananda spoke of her as the hope and inspiration of Indian womanhood. Our country has produced many great women. In our own Tamilnad, we had Aṇḍāl, the God-filled woman, who has inspired thousands of men and women. The name of Sītā has been a perpetual inspiration not only in India, but also in the countries of South-East Asia. In his Madras lecture on 'The Sages of India' (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, Eighth Edition, pp. 255-56), Swami Vivekananda spoke of her thus:

> 'And what to speak of Sītā? You may exhaust the literature of the world that is past, and I may assure you that you will have to exhaust the literature of the world of the future, before finding another Sītā. Sīta is unique. That character was depicted once and for all. There may have been several Ramas, perhaps, but never more than one Sīta! She is the very type of the true Indian woman, for all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sītā; and here she stands these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman, and child, throughout the length and breadth of te land of Āryāvarta. ... Sītā has gone into the very vitals of our race. She is there in the blood of every Hindu man and woman; we are all children of Sīta. Any attempt to modernize our women, if it tries to take our women away from that ideal of Sīta, is immediately a failure, as we see every day. The women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of Sīta, and that is the only way'.

4. *Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother*

Our history has been inspired by thousands of women who had attained peace and poise and fullness through their spiritual life, and these values have become the inalienable characteristics of Indian womanhood. We had *Brahmavadinī* Gārgī in the Upaniṣadic age who participated in the intellectual life of the age. We had Āṇḍāl and Mīra and a galaxy of others in the earlier and later Middle Ages. And in the modern age we have the unique example of Bhairavi Brahmani, who was the teacher of Sri Ramakrishna and who guided him in his spiritual *sādhanās*. We have also examples of heroic women who have used their gifts in the service of the nation in the fields of literature, statecraft, and war. In this long, unbroken line of heroic womanhood, Sarada Devi, of our own time, occupies a unique position.

She was married at the young age of five to the God-intoxicated Ramakrishna. Gossip-mongers in her village pitied her for being the wife of a mad man; but during the few occasions that Sri Ramakrishna went to the village in the next twelve years, she found in him only a loving saintly husband and friend. But the teasing by some of the village women intensified as she grew older until it became unbearable. Entering the age of eighteen, she decided to test for herself the truth of the gossip by presenting herself before her husband in the temple garden of Dakshineswar. She walked the long weary eighty miles, with the final stretch in a palanquin owing to illness and fatigue, in the company of her father,and reached the Dakshineswar temple at night. She went straight to Sri Ramakrishna's room and presented herself before him, not without some misgivings as to how she would be received by her world-forgetting husband. But all her fears and misgivings vanished when Sri Ramakrishna received her with the utmost tenderness and cordiality, saying: 'Ah, you have come! But how nice it would have been if you had come earlier!' Such were the loving words with which Sri Ramakrishna welcomed her. Her mind was at last at peace, and she found the village gossips utterly baseless.

There is a place for innocent gossip in every society. But the gossip of which Sarada Devi was a victim is the product of a dried-up heart and social irresponsibility, which is the root cause of much peacelessness and suffering in Indian social life. The eradication of this disturbing element in our social life will be the touchstone of our women's progress. Education has to help us to discipline ourselves, widen our sympathies, and intensify our social feeling. Our speech and act will then proceed from a fuller and richer personality and tend to enhance the peace and happiness of our fellow human beings.

The Holy Mother was the embodiment of simplicity, love, and service. Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother lived their married life as monk and nun, as teacher and disciple, and as teachers and guides of men and women—that is the wonderful story of their life. After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother continued her spiritual ministration, and she was sought after by hundreds of men and women in India and abroad. This woman, apparently old-fashioned and simple, with no education worth the name, was yet modern, with an appeal to the moderns. In her artless simplicity and self-effacing love, she seemed to represent the fulfilment of the urges of the modern age. As Sister Nivedita says (*The Master As I Saw Him*, pp. 147-48):

> 'To me it has always appeared that she is Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood. But is she the last of an old order, or the beginning of a new? In her one sees realized that wisdom and sweetness to which the simplest of women may attain. And yet, to myself, the stateliness of her courtesy and her great open mind are almost as wonderful as her sainthood. I have never known her hesitate in giving utterance to large and generous judgement, however new or complex might be the question put before her. Her life is one long stillness of prayer. Her whole experience is of theocratic civilization. Yet she rises to the height of every situation. Is she tortured by the perversity of any about her? The only sign is a strange quiet and intensity that comes upon her. Does one carry to her some perplexity or mortification born of social developments beyond her ken? With unerring intuition she goes straight to the heart of the matter, and sets the questioner in the true attitude to the difficulty. Or is there need for severity? No foolish sentimentality causes her to waver. ...
>
> 'And yet is she, as one of her spiritual children said of her, speaking literally of her gift of song, "full of music", all gentleness, all playfulness. And the room wherein she worships, withal, is filled with sweetness.'

The remark of Sri Ramakrishna about Sarada Devi is significant: 'She is the goddess *Sarasvatī* come to the world to give knowledge to mankind.' This knowledge is not book knowledge, nor secular information, but she is the *guru* who removes the miasma of ignorance and confers the gift of spiritual illumination, which helps us to see our way even in the secular field of life. Hers is the wisdom which is the synthesis of the knowledge of the external world, which is positive science, and the knowledge of the internal world, which is religion.

5. *Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī*

It is an old saying in India that *Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī*, the goddess of wealth and the goddess of knowledge, can never live together. But modern America is an example to disprove this belief. Swami Vivekananda was amazed to see the co-presence of knowledge and wealth in that country. The recent history of the

West is the story of the advancement of knowledge leading to increase of wealth and power, of science as *lucifera* flowing into science as *fructifera*. The capacity for practical application of knowledge is the product of a disciplined mind. The basis of all wealth, economic, mental, or spiritual, is the discipline of the mind; it is the product of intelligent, honest, hard work. Love of ease, physical or mental, is the greatest enemy of all forms of wealth and welfare. Swami Vivekananda found intense love of knowledge in the women of the West. Indian women today have all opportunities and facilities to pursue knowledge and the culture of their minds, and, thus enriched inwardly, to discipline themselves to achieve wealth, glory, happiness, and spirituality. But, unfortunately, the educated women of modern India, barring a few exceptions, love wealth and ease and comfort, more than knowledge leading to the culture of the mind and heart. Unlike in America, here women constitute only a small percentage of the audience at meetings and discourses at which serious subjects are discussed; and this, in spite of all the social facilities, leisure, and a modern education which they command.

What a distance the modern Indian woman has to travel to acquire the grace of *Sarasvatī* and, through that, the grace of Her counterpart, *Lakṣmi!* Both the high goddesses will ever remain far from those men and women who prefer ease and frivolity to the austerity of knowledge and self-discipline. This is the austerity, *tapas*, constructive and creative— which ancient India practised, by which she became known the world over as the home of wealth, wisdom, and the arts. *Tad hi tapaḥ, tad hi tapaḥ*—'That verily is *tapas*, that verily is *tapas*', proclaims the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (I. 9).

6. *The Austerity of Speech Discipline*

Our women are adept in certain types of austerities like fasting and other physical privations. These are certainly assets; but they are not enough; they become sterile in the absence of other positive disciplines; of these, control of speech and emotion and channelling their energies to socially beneficial purposes is the most important for the development of character and efficiency. Much unhappiness in home and society proceeds from the unrestrained speech of our women. According to Indian thought, the goddess of speech or *Vāgdevatā* is also the goddess of wisdom. By discipline and purification of our speech, we achieve wisdom and radiate peace and happiness. *Yogasya prathamaṁ dvāraṁ vāṅnirodhaḥ*— 'The first doorway to *yoga* is discipline of speech', says Śankarācārya in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (verse 367).

It is worthwhile to ponder over the significance of the advice that the Holy Mother gave to a visiting woman who was grieved over the thought of the imminent passing away of the Mother. 'Why do you fear? You have seen Sri Ramakrishna', assured the Mother, and added, after a pause, in a weak voice:

> 'Let me, however, tell you one thing. If you want peace of mind, do not look for faults in others. Rather look out to discover your own weaknesses. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one here is an alien or a stranger, my child. The whole world is your own.'

Rabia (A. D. 767-815) was a great saint of Islam like our Āṇḍāḷ of Tamilnadu (seventh century A.D.). Some friends asked her whether she loved God. 'Yes', she replied. 'But do you not hate the devil?' they inquired. 'My love of God does not give me time to hate the devil' was her characteristic reply.

7. *Swami Vivekananda on the Future Indian Woman*

In such characters we find the consummation of a woman's home-making virtues where, through the expansion of the heart, the whole world becomes the home.

Swami Vivekananda has bequeathed to us his vision of the future Indian woman. Writes Sister Nivedita *(The Master as I Saw Him*, p. 291):

> 'He could not foresee a Hindu woman of the future entirely without the old power of meditation. Modern science women must learn; but not at the cost of the ancient spirituality. He saw clearly enough that the ideal education would be one that should exercise the smallest possible influence for direct change on the social body as a whole. It would be that which should best enable every woman, in time to come, to resume into herself the greatness of all the women of the Indian past'.

Your college is fortunate in that it has the most valuable asset in its association with the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi. This will be a perennial source of inspiration to one and all associated with it—students and staff, parents and management alike. I am happy to have spent a few minutes here. I am grateful to Dr. Rajammal Devadas for inviting me here and giving me an opportunity to study the working of this Home Science College.

8. *Conclusion*

Coming now to the formal task of inaugurating the College Union, I have great pleasure in doing so, and I wish your College Union all success in the coming years. The first duty of a Union in a Home Science College is to strive constantly to make the institution true to its name, to achieve the atmosphere of a home in the college campus itself, by fostering an active spirit of affection and fellowship, team spirit and dedication, in the teachers and the taught as also between them. My thanks to you all.

5

THE INDIAN IDEAL OF WOMANHOOD*

1. *Introduction*

IN the long course of her history, India has experimented with life from various angles and at various levels and has discovered many truths, and proved a few of them for herself and the world. The Indian mind long ago discovered that the object of life is not pleasure, much less pain, but knowledge, through a detached study of both. Pleasure and pain and all experience are the opportunity for the mind of man to gain knowledge and wisdom. Young immature cultures fail to grasp this vital truth, and they build their edifice on the shaky basis of the pursuit of pleasure; but such edifices fall, unable to stand the pressures from within and without. Indian culture has endured these thousands of years, surviving dark periods of challenge from within and without, because of its stable foundations furnished by her early thinkers and leaders, and because of the mature *Weltanschauung* or world-view which they had provided for her people.

2. *The Innate Divinity of All Men and Women*

Among the values which that *Weltanschauung* has placed before humanity, the most significant is the idea of the innate divinity of man. Men and women and all beings are divine in their essential nature. Indian thought views social evolution as the process of the incorporation of this great value in the texture of human relationships. From it are derived the values of freedom, equality, and the sacredness of personality. That forms the measure of social and cultural progress.

Among the various types of human relationships, that between man and woman is the most important. The status of woman is the most significant criterion of progress of any society or culture. The

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*Speech at the Symposium on the subject of *The Ideal of Womanhood in Different Cultures* held on 3 December 1954, at the Ramakrishna Mission Society. Rangoon, Burma, on the occasion of the Holy Mother's Birth Centenary celebrations history of the different cultures presents various phases of the evolution of this idea.

3. *The Status of Women in Indian Society*

In the lower levels of culture, this status is one of dependence in theory and practice, woman being meant as an object of pleasure to man, the stronger sex. But in the earliest glimpse of recorded Indian society, we find this stage already passed. The *Ṛg-Veda* presents a picture of woman as the equal of man in civic and religious spheres. In the pursuit of knowledge and virtue, in the performance of rituals, in the composition of hymns, even in the harder fields of war and statecraft, we find the Vedic woman as a companion and help-mate of man. This equality in practice soon found its sustenance in theory. The Upaniṣads expounded the idea of man and woman as the equal halves of a divine unity, each the complement of, and incomplete without, the other. The Upaniṣads also discovered the real nature of man and woman to consist in the Ātman, the sexless Self, which is ever pure, perfect, and free. Associated with body and mind, it becomes conditioned as personality with its sex and other differentiations. This is *man (or woman)* the known, the subject of sociology and other empirical sciences, as contrasted with *man* (or *woman) the unknown,* the subject of spiritual sciences.

Man as known to sociology is limited, imperfect, and helpless; and he or she strives to become whole through associations with individuals and objects outside of himself or herself. The satisfactions proceeding from such associations range from the purely animal to the deeply spiritual, passing through the stages of the primitive and the cultured. It is the idea of restraint that characterizes progress from one to the other. And this restraint is the checking of the lower self, *man the known,* and the manifestation of the higher self, *man the unknown,* the Ātman.

This spiritual view of man as expounded in the Upaniṣads became the rock foundation of the Indian cultural edifice. It affected profoundly our theories of marriage and morals, interpersonal and inter-religious relationships, and our attitude to God and the world. Thanks to it, India has always upheld, in theory, the spiritual equality of man and man, and man and woman. But in social practice, there has been increasing laxity after the Vedic period, not because of deliberate human choice, but due to the vicissitudes of history. Deliberate human action, in the great epochs of Indian history, in the field of human relationships, has always tended to uphold the ideals of equality and freedom.

4. *'Abhyudaya' and 'Niḥśreyasa'*

Indian thought views woman exactly as it views man, as a person with a destiny. The search for this destiny makes her a pilgrim in search of *abhyudaya* and *niḥśreyasa*—worldly excellence and spiritual realization. In the sphere of the pursuit of *niḥśreyasa*, spiritual realization, which is the highest reach of life, woman as much as man has to walk in single file. Perfect freedom and independence, and the weight of responsibility involved in both, descend upon that individual, be it man or woman, who has no craving for external delights, and longs for God alone. Only the unworldly man or woman can bear the weight of this responsibility; and they form the truly free. Throughout our history, even in our darkest days, this type of woman has brightened our horizon. The *Brahmavādinīs* of the Upaniṣads, the Theri nuns of Buddhism, and the nuns of Jainism of earlier periods, and Bhairavi Brāhmani, one of the *gurus* of Sri Ramakrishna, in our own time, proclaim the freedom of woman to scale the heights of spirituality.

It is in the sphere of *abhyudaya,* worldly prosperity, that the status of woman has suffered periodic diminution; it is necessary to point out that there can be no real independence in this sphere for either man or woman; interdependence is the law in this sphere, and it alone leads to success in achieving *abhyudaya.* But since the last fifteen hundred years, women have lost more and more of their freedom and become more and more dependent upon men; this is largely due to a natural social response to the challenge of disturbed social conditions and the consequent sagging of the human spirit, and not to the wickedness of men. But its long continuance has resulted in the arrested development of Indian society and stunting of our women's personality, as pointed out by Swami Vivekananda. That phase is now fortunately past. The society has set about the task of regaining the social balance. In modern times there are powerful social movements, which have the backing of the spiritual stimulus provided by Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, to give back to women their individuality and enable them to grow to their full stature and to take their equal place in home and society.

5. *Indian Society: One Note-worthy Feature*

But it is noteworthy that *India has not experienced a feminist movement*. It is important to note the significance of this fact. *It is when a world-view goes counter to the claims of women, and men uphold that world-view as against the spirit of the times, that a feminist movement takes place.* This is the experience of modern Western history. But in India men came forward to uphold the claims of women and move with the times; and in this, they were sustained as much by old Indian spiritual thought as contained in the Vedānta as by recent Indian spiritual experience as expressed in the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement.

The aspirations of modern Indian women have to be viewed against this background. Free to seek the most advanced intellectual development, or pursue any social avocations, the Indian woman of today does not feel herself as a competitor of man, but as his comrade, whose good wishes and help she values.

6. *Marriage Becoming a Relationship Between Equals*

This has led to important consequences for the national ideal of womanhood. For the first time after several centuries, marriage is becoming a comradeship of equals, a joint adventure in the enrichment of society and the enjoyment of its delights. Under the old joint family, woman as wife hardly got the chance to express herself. The impact of modern world forces has all but broken down that joint family, *making for the emergence of the wife as the queen of a limited household within, and as a citizen in an unlimited social field of endeavour without.*

It is this ideal that is gripping Indian womanhood today. She prefers to be the queen of a limited household to being an obscure item in a large joint family. *What is more, it is this ideal that the modern Indian man also seeks his wife to embody.* He does not seek a dependent or plaything in his wife, but an equal in intelligence, strength of character, and social feeling; not a woman to worship or be worshipped, but a companion who has the strength and will to share his joys and sorrows, burdens and responsibilities. In this we catch an echo of the earliest Indian social experience of the *Ṛg-Veda. In this realization of the manhood of man and the womanhood of woman in the context of the equality of the marriage relationship, India recognizes a significant experience of spiritual education.* Here is the emergence of a family unit out of the welter of the modern transition which will form the nursery of the nation's morals, the school of its religious attitudes, and the integrated brick of its social edifice.

Swami Vivekananda expressed the view that the old Indian civilization had comparatively neglected woman as wife to uphold woman as mother, whereas the modern Western civilization has done just the reverse. To his judgement, both appeared as partial and imperfect experiments, and he exhorted both the civilizations to apply the required corrective.

7. *The Problems of Rights and Duties in the Marriage Context*

Two egocentric individuals in search of life-fulfilment, and brought into the most intimate social relation, are husband and wife in marriage. To realize this object of fulfilment, they have to learn to give of themselves to each other before seeking to take from each other. To teach only the wife to give, and emphasize this again and again, is to upset the balance; and to make the husband learn to take and neglect to give leads to less than fulfilment for both. India leaned to this exaggeration, and her later literature is full of the *duties* of wives and the *rights* of husbands. It did help to develop some sterling other-regarding virtues in our women; but it tended, except in a few gifted cases, to dwarf the full personality of the generality of our women. Needless to say, it tended to exaggerate in less graceful directions the husband's personality as well.

Similar difficulties have arisen in the West in the reverse way by the wife's standing on her rights, flimsy and serious, and largely forgetting that it is more blessed to give than to receive. A healthy society is the product of a harmonious adjustment of rights and duties between wife and husband, where neither value impinges harshly on the smooth-functioning relationship.

It is in this sphere that Indian thought, with its spiritual view of man and life, has much to contribute to steady the feet of men and women in the East and the West. Man is not a static individual; the child grows into the boy or girl, and thence into the young man or young woman, to end in the old man and old woman. Sex-awareness, which rises and gets strong in the middle two-stages, tapers off at both ends. Woman as wife is largely a focus of biological and social value. The grasping ego being the centre out of which the energies of its personality proceed, it exudes very little of the flavour of the spiritual, while its morality is largely of the social kind, contractual and conventional. But such a wife or husband is only an abstract concept. Any actual wife or husband rises at least occasionally to heights of ego-transcendence, revealing the beauty, strength, and calm lying imbedded in the real Self behind the ego.

8. *Wifehood versus Motherhood*

The increasing liberation of this deeper Self in the context of marriage is what is proposed by Indian thought. So far as woman is concerned, this is achieved by the wife growing into the mother, not merely or even necessarily biologically, but certainly spiritually. Motherhood is a spiritual transformation of wifehood. The wife may and does *demand and take;* but the mother feels it her privilege to *give.* Within the limited circle of her motherhood, she is the example of self-transcendence through self-effacement. If woman as wife is socially significant, woman as mother is spiritually glorious. If the spiritual is only coterminous with the biological, then woman as mother of a little biological group would have remained the highest moral and spiritual development possible for her sex. But the spiritual value transcends the biological and even the social, and finds expression in an ideal of motherhood where love and service break the barriers of family, race, and creed, and assume a universal aspect. It is this spiritual elevation which is self-transcendence that enables women even as wife to function effectively as a citizen, embracing with her mother-heart the millions of its body-politic. If this is called finding life—larger and fuller life—then the path to it is self-development through self-effacement.

That is what a woman does when she grows from the wifehood to the motherhood ideal.

9. *The Motherhood Ideal: Its Significance and Social Impact*

In this, no value is neglected or negated, but there is a growth from a lower to a higher personality, and a progressive manifestation of the inherent divinity. This, as I have pointed out before, is the Indian criterion of progress of an individual or a culture. This motherhood ideal is the highest reach of womanhood according to Indian culture. This symbol of self-effacing love has revealed to the Hindu mind the presence of a divine reality within, over and above the personality of the visible mother. To the Hindu, God is the Mother of all creation. *A nation that has educated itself to look upon God as Mother has learnt to invest its view of woman with the utmost tenderness and reverence.* The culture of the Hindu trains him to look upon all women, nay, to look upon the female of all species, as forms of the one Divine Mother. The mother is more worthy of reverence than father or teacher according to our scriptures. Says the *Manu Smṛti* (II. 145):

Upadhyayandasacaryaḥ acaryaṇam śataṁ pita;
Sahasraṁ tu pitṛn mata gauravenātiricyate—

'From the point of view of reverence due, a teacher is tenfold superior to a mere lecturer, a father a hundredfold to a teacher, and a mother a thousandfold to a father.'

And what constitutes this abundant glory in the mother is her self-effacing love and compassion, which, to the Hindu, is a mark of high spirituality and true culture. And women in general have the privilege to attain to these. *It is this vision that India has always held out before her women and which her daughters have passionately struggled to realize in their lives.* Even the apparent failings of her women proceed largely from that passion. The practice of suttee, for example, proceeded from loyalty to the ideal of chastity which found itself threatened in a chaotic society.

The ideals of chastity and purity, unselfishness and service, simplicity and modesty, have been pursued by our women, drawn by that vision of innate divinity. They have become the warp and woof of her being. The Indian woman cannot jump out of this inheritance of hers. Warned Swami Vivekananda more than fifty-six years ago *(Complete Works,* Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 256):

> 'Any attempt to modernize our women, if it tries to take our women away from that ideal of Sitā, is immediately failure, as we see every day. The women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of Sītā, and that is the only way.'

The old Indian woman has been nourished on the ideals of Sītā, Sāvitrī, Damayantī. In the limited world in which she functioned, these ideals sufficed to sustain her. But the woman of today, thrown into a world of wide opportunities, finds these ideals lacking in allround nourishment. Not that she is insensitive to these appeals; far from it; but she feels her newer aspirations and energies unsustained by them. Hence her unsteady steps, and the fuss which often accompanies her activities and movements in the wider world, for want of a total conviction proceeding from the sanctions of the national spiritual heritage. And it was this sanction that she received from Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and the Holy Mother.

10. *Swami Vivekananda and Our Women*

Swami Vivekananda is the first monk in history to uphold and to work for the freedom and equality of woman *without any reservation.* While upholding the Indian ideal of motherhood before the modern woman, he wanted it to be the fulfilment of the modern ideal of wifehood and not its negation. This is to be achieved by woman remaining as woman and realizing the perfection inherent within her through her functions in the home and society. *This is the technique of practical spirituality which will help woman to combine energy, practicality, and social feeling with poise and peace and inwardness.* The woman who stretches out her energies into the wider social field must have first learnt to establish peace and orderliness nearer home.

This is the ideal of womanhood which holds an appeal to the modern Indian woman. It connotes a largeness and richness of personality and a steadiness and strength of character, with vast inner energies released but held in poise and ease, *making for efficient work without fuss, and wide-field function without friction.*

It is the fruit of a hard *sādhanā,* consisting of a detached pursuit of spiritual knowledge and excellence and the nourishment of the inner being through meditation and discrimination.

11. *The Spiritual Growth of Our Women –*

That is the contribution of pure religion; and the future Indian woman is inconceivable without this training of religion, according to Swami Vivekananda. Writes Sister Nivedita (*The Master as I Saw Him,* Ninth Edition, p. 283):

> 'He could not foresee a Hindu woman of the future, entirely without the old power of meditation. Modern science women must learn; but not at the cost of the ancient spirituality. He saw clearly enough that the ideal education would be one that should exercise the smallest possible influence for direct change on the social body as a whole. It would be that which should best enable every woman, in time to come, to resume into herself the greatness of all the women of the Indian past.'

So educated, woman will realize her worth as woman and contribute her distinct share to the peace and prosperity of society. The modern woman's temptation to grow into the likeness of man is only a passing phase of this transition. Indian thought holds that, by remaining true to one's own type, man and woman will eventually outgrow the sex awareness in the realization of the Atman , the sexless Self, which is the true nature of both man and woman. Swami Vivekananda held this as the true direction of progress for man and woman. Says Sister Nivedita *(ibid.,* p. 293):

> 'He would never tolerate any scheme of life and polity that tended to bind tighter on mind and soul the fetters of the body. The greater the individual, the more would she transcend the limitations of femininity in mind and character; and the more was such transcendence to be expected and admired.'

12. *Sarada Devi and Our Women*

Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, stands as an inspiring example to the modern Indian woman in her efforts to steady her steps through the welter of the modern transition. Herself an ideal wife and mother and nun, she is the perennial spring to nourish the life of woman in her varied roles. 'But is she the last of an old order, or the beginning of a new?' asks Sister Nivedita and continues *(ibid.,* pp. 147-48):

> 'In her, one sees realized that wisdom and sweetness to which the simplest of women may attain. And yet, to myself, the stateliness of her courtesy and her great

open mind are almost as wonderful as her sainthood. I have never known her hesitate in giving utterance to large and generous judgement, however new or complex might be the question put before her. Her life is one long stillness of prayer. Her whole experience is of theocratic civilization. Yet she rises to the height of every situation. Is she tortured by the perversity of any about her? The only sign is a strange quiet and intensity that comes upon her. Does one carry to her some perplexity or mortification born of social developments beyond her ken? With unerring intuition she goes straight to the heart of the matter, and sets the questioner in the true attitude to the difficulty. Or is there need for severity? No foolish sentimentality causes her to waver.

'... He who has transgressed her code of delicacy and honour, will never enter her presence again. ...

'And yet is she, as one of her spiritual children said of her, speaking literally of her gift of song, "full of music", all gentleness, all playfulness. And the room wherein she worships, withal, is filled with sweetness.'

13. *Conclusion*

In this delineation of the ideal of Indian womanhood, there is little that is local and parochial and much that is human and universal. And it is natural; for ancient Indian thought has expounded the subject of man or woman largely in terms of *human* excellence and not in terms of the *national or racial.* And recent Indian thought, as expressed through Swami Vivekananda, consciously seeks the goal of the synthesis of Eastern and Western life values with a view to evolving a complete human culture and civilization.

6

IDEALS OF INDIAN WOMANHOOD*

1. *Introduction*

I am very thankful to Sri Avinashilingam and Dr. Rajammal for inviting me to participate in your annual lighting ceremony this year and to light your Mother Lamp. The ceremony we have gone through just now has impressed me deeply with its spiritual beauty and artistic charm. Experiences like these give one a sense of confidence in the bright future of our society. When we look around us today, we come across many things and happenings that tend to depress us. But educational institutions like this Home Science College bring us cheer and hope. Those of you among the students of this college who have lighted their lamps from the Mother Lamp bear the responsibility and privilege to radiate that light to the world around you through your lives and works. That is the great purpose of education and religion.

2. *'Dhiyo Yo Naḥ Pracodayāt'*

Light has been for man everywhere the symbol of God. Physical light helps us to find our way in darkness. But man has also viewed it as the symbol of God who is described in Vedānta as *cit*, i.e. pure Consciousness or pure Knowledge. In our very ancient *Gāyatri mantram* we pray: *dhiyo yo' naḥ pracodayāt*—. 'Endow us with (the light of) understanding'. It is a prayer to lead us from the darkness of ignorance and spiritual blindness to the light of knowledge and spiritual awareness.

This ceremony of lighting the lamp is a fitting conclusion, therefore, to the first stage of your education. As you now go out into the wide world in search of your life-fulfilment, the nation expects you also to radiate the light of knowledge you have received and banish the darkness around you in your society.

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* Speech at the annual 'Lighting the Lamp' ceremony of the Avinashilingam Home Science College, Coimbatore-10, on 23 February 1973

3. *Rituals versus Ritualism*

Rituals and ceremonies have a part to play in the education of man, not only in religion, but also even in politics. Flag salutation on our Republic Day is a ritual. Criticisms of rituals and ceremonies become justifiable only when we indulge too much in them, do them without grasping their meaning and significance, and fail to back them up with active interest in the other vital concerns of life as well. Ritualism is making rituals the be-all and end-all of life;they then tend to become the expressions of a static piety. This is what happened to us during the past few centuries. But if there is real *tapasyā* behind them, rituals become meaningful as expressions of dynamic spirituality. Behind today's ceremony here, there lies the *tapasyā* which you students have undergone to acquire knowledge, to understand the nature of the world and the nature of the life process. But this lighting ceremony is not meant to tell you that you have *completed* your *tapasyā* of education, but to impress upon you that your life ahead is also a *tapasyā* of seeking knowledge and life-excellence, as the life behind you has been. Thus this ceremony, set in between two types of *tapasyā,* shines in added lustre.

4. *Vidyā: Parā and Aparā*

Over 550 girls among you have lit your lamps today completing education in this college. During the past few years, a few thousands have similarly done the same. What is this college announcing through this ceremony? It announces the happy news of the passing through its portals, into the wide world outside, batches of trained minds, illumined hearts, and strengthened wills who will brighten the horizon of human life. That is the great service that is being rendered by several institutions like this college all over our country today. Remembrance of this hope and expectation, of this noble motivation, of your college will give you strength and inspiration to live up to it and achieve the fullest self-expression in your lives.

We may say that our education is secular, as we may say that our Indian state is secular. But we do not mean to banish ethical and spiritual values from our secularism, nor divorce secular values from our spirituality. Our national philosophy, the Vedānta, embraces in its sweeping synthesis the entire gamut of secular and spiritual values. As expressed by our *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad:* all knowledge is one, whether secular —*aparā*— or *spiritual*—*parā*. In India today, we need education that comprehends both, that enables our students to equip themselves with the knowledge that will help them to face the economic, political, and social challenges of their nation as much as to help them to give higher and higher spiritual expressions to their life-energy. It is with this goal before them that this institution, and all the other institutions similarly deriving inspiration from Sri Ramakrishna, run. Behind this Home Science College, there lies the educational vision of its founder, Sri Avinashilingam, and the devoted efficient service of its Principal, Dr. Rajammal Devadas. Her tremendous energy and enthusiasm for the cause of education and her deep love for her students and staff, combined with the efficiency, devotion, and team-work of the staff and the hearty responsiveness of the students, constitute the greatest and unique asset of this institution. Unifying all these ingredients of a healthy educational institution stand the personalities of Sri Ramakrishna, Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, with the impressive Sri Ramakrishna temple as the inspiring nucleus of the campus. All these circumstances have created an atmosphere of interpenetration and communion of minds and hearts, which is the very soul of all true education.

5. *Education to Combine the Twin Energies of Science and Spirituality*

Quest for knowledge, quest for life-excellence—this is the educational message of the Upaniṣads. The more these national ideals and aspirations find expression in our educational institutions, the better for us and for our nation. In the life of Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, we have an abiding source of inspiration for all of us, and particularly for our girls. And I am glad to note that the girls of this college are responding to the spiritual beauty and charm of the Holy Mother. It is reflected in the vows you took, a while ago, that you would preserve and enhance throughout your lives the ideals of Indian womanhood. And I am glad to be with you today to convey to you my love and good wishes and to speak to you, at the request of your principal, on *The Ideals of Indian Womanhood.* In a symposium on 'The Women of the World', held at the Ramakrishna

Mission, Rangoon, Burma, in connection with the Sarada Devi birth centenary celebrations in 1953-54, I had occasion to speak on *The Indian Ideal of Womanhood* which is included in my book: *Eternal Values for a Changing Society,* published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. The subject of today's discourse is an equally fascinating theme. The ideals which have moved Indian women through the centuries, to which they have clung with devotion in prosperity and adversity, are attracting the respectful attention of women in other parts of the world today, particularly of women in the West. Western women today envy Indian women for their inner peace and poise of personality which they themselves seem to have lost in the turbulence of the modern age. In the modern Indian context, the Indian ideals of womanhood will coincide in several respects with the Indian ideals of manhood. Swami Vivekananda tells us that the Indian womanhood of the future will reflect a fullness of strength and fearlessness, intrepidity and initiative, long associated with ideals of manhood in our country, but in association with her inherited traits of gentleness and love and service. She will achieve this synthesis, Vivekananda held, by the assimilation, in the modern period, of the twin energies coming from secular and spiritual education.

6. *Status of Women in Our Society: Past and Present*

In the ancient Vedic period of our long history, our women enjoyed much freedom and respect in our society. The girls were invested, on the eve of the commencement of their education, as the boys were, with their sacred thread at the *upanayana* ceremony. They also recited the holy *Gāyatrī mantram.* These privileges put our girls on a par with our boys on the road of their personality development. But, in the later ages, women's position in our society gradually deteriorated; the privileges of *upanayana, Gāyatri* recitation, and Vedic study were taken away from them, though the *upanayana* is a privilege still enjoyed by the girls of the other branch of the Vedic Aryans, namely, the Zoroastrians or the Parsees. Side by side with this contraction of privileges came the practice of early marriage, resorted to in the interests of security during the insecurity of long foreign invasions, but which meant also the shortening of the period of education for the girls and confining their education to what they could learn from their husbands.

This was the situation that obtained up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. But as soon as our country entered the modern period, and the social and political insecurity, that had called forth, as a defensive measure, child marriage and other practices inimical to women's education and self-development, were removed, our women began to move forward at a rapid pace, taking the nation also along with them. All our modern national leaders from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Gandhiji were upholders of women's education and women's freedom for self-development. Swami Vivekananda impressed on the nation the urgent need to educate our women and said that, as a bird cannot fly on one wing, our nation cannot progress with only our men getting education. Both our boys and girls need to be educated and both need to be given the blessings of both secular and spiritual education. Secular education is a powerful human energy resource, by which a human being develops the capacity to grip the world around him or her, to make conscious choices, and initiate independent action. In other words, it will give our people, both men and women, long submerged in ignorance and helplessness, a sense of individual worth and dignity and responsibility. Submergence in a state of ignorance has long submerged them in society, in the collectivity, and made them into anonymous nothings in an amorphous mass. Knowledge of the world around them and of their own bodies and minds will now awaken them to their individual worth and dignity. The first spiritual blessing of secular education is this establishing of man in the elementary self-knowledge of individuality. And this is what modern India is engaged in today—leading our millions on the high road of human development through the great adventure of education, on the first necessary stage of the long road of spiritual growth and development of man.

7. *Growth from Individuality to Personality*

But this first stage must be followed by the second and subsequent stages, if man is to achieve fulfilment. To stop at individuality is not enough; any stagnation at that level is harmful to man and his society. If the pre-individual man is submerged in the collectivity and is ignorant, weak and below par, man as individual is a focus of tension and unfulfilment which, in its creative phase, is the mother of initiative and drive but which, in the state of what can be termed *over-fried individuality,* becomes the source of inner poverty and frustration. Individuality represents the achievement of a dignity which, in order to be preserved, enhanced, and profited from, needs to be made to grow further—the sooner the better. That sense of individuality, that strengthening of the ego, that rescuing of man from his submergence in the mass, is meant to be only the first phase, a very necessary, but transitional, first stage, of man's development, though it marks, in evolutionary retrospect, the crowning act of the drama of that awakening to his self-identity, which had commenced, at the very beginning of organic evolution, with the development of a rudimentary awareness of its environment by the living cell.

This first stage of individuality must lead to the second stage *in which individuality grows into personality* and *in which man consciously begins to achieve his or her spiritual growth*—a growth which witnesses the emergence of ethical awareness and the capacity to love, and to be loved by, other human beings. What Vedanta calls spiritual growth is what twentieth-century biology calls psycho-social evolution, in which evolution rises from the organic, relevant to the pre-human phase, to the psycho-social level, relevant to the human phase. This psycho-social evolution, marked by the expansion of individuality to personality, of the 'unripe' ego into the 'ripe' ego, in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, is the unique birthright and privilege of every man and woman, for which mother nature has provided man with the requisite organic equipments.

We must remember what Swami Vivekananda said about this spiritual growth of man. To him, it represents the true meaning and scope of religion. 'Religion is the manifestation', says he, 'of the divinity already within man'. It does not consist in mere ritual or ceremony, membership of a church or temple, or subscription to creed or dogma. These are welcome and become meaningful when they result in that spiritual growth, in that awareness of one's divine Self, the Ātman.

8. *'Tasmāt Yogī Bhavārjuna'*

The manifestation of this innate divine nature, in the context of one's life and work, is the special and original message of the philosophy of the *Gītā. The Gītā* calls this philosophy and its technique by the name *yoga,* and defines *yoga* as *karmasu kauśalam*—

'efficiency in actions' and *samatvam* —'equanimity'. *Yoga* is the philosophy of a double human efficiency through two complementary life-journeys—productive efficiency in society, by which man enhances, through his work in the outer world, in co-operation with other men, the general welfare of society, and inward spiritual efficiency, by which he advances steadily in his inner journey towards the awareness of his inborn divine nature.

Our students should strive to acquire through their education this double efficiency. By this they will become true *yogis* in the beautiful sense in which the *Gītā* uses this great word. *Tasmāt yogī bhavārjuna*—'therefore, be a *yogi,* O Arjuna', exhorts Śrī Kṛṣṇa, through Arjuna, all of you, all of us, *This yoga has nothing to do with any religious magic or miracles or pseudo-mysticism, which thrive in secrecy and cannot stand the light of truth or rational scrutiny;* whereas, the yoga of the *Gītā* is open, communicable, and verifiable in life, like the truths of the physical sciences.

In the modern West, education stops at the development of individuality, of the ego centred in man's organic system. By strengthening that ego, that education turns out individuals, strong and self-confident, no doubt, but also with less and less capacity to *communicate* with other individuals. That capacity to communicate, to love and to be loved, which is so vital to human happiness and fulfilment, comes to man only through an education that initiates man's spiritual growth from individuality to personality.

It is this situation, and the keen awareness of an inner spiritual poverty, that turn many thinking people in the modern West to the rational, universal, and practical philosophy of India—the Vedānta. Thus, religion as expounded in Vedānta, as expounded by Swami Vivekananda, which shows the way to human spiritual growth beyond his organic level and its limitations, is no primitive human superstition, but is part of a profound and rational philosophy of total and integral human development and fulfilment. When man achieves that growth even a little, he becomes aware of the divine pulsations within him and, consequently, within others as well. And so Śrī Kṛṣṇa assures us in the second chapter of the *Gītā: Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyaté mahato bhayāt*— 'Even a little of this *dharma* saves man from great fear'.

When we manifest even a little of our innate divine nature, we are taking our first steps on this long but exciting road of spirituality which yield, as its by-product, increasing ethical and aesthetic awareness and responsiveness, at every step. Spirituality takes us beyond our genetical and other biological limitations and thraldoms and, in doing so, lifts us out of the animal to the genuinely human level.

9. *'Arise and Awake!'*

This is the meaning of spiritual education, *in the context of* and *as a continuation of,* and *not apart from,* our secular education. Its aim and scope is to lead our youths on to the very first steps of their long spiritual journey, leaving them to continue that journey further, after leaving their formal schooling, according to one's capacity, urgency, and need, and in the context of one's life and work. The *Gītā* will exhort and guide them to continue their spiritual growth in the context of their career-building and breadwinning. Hence the summons that the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* sends out to all humanity (III. 14):

> *Uttiṣṭhata! Jāgrata! prāpya varān nibodhata;*
> *Kṣurasya dharā niśitā duratyayā durgam pathastat kavayo vadanti—*

'Arise, Awake, and enlighten yourself by resorting to the great (teachers); for, like the sharp edge of a razor is that path, so say the sages (who have traversed it), difficult to tread and hard to cross!'

Commenting on this clarion call, Saṅkarācārya says in his exposition of this verse:

> 'This is not to be neglected; hence exhorts the *Śruti* (the Upaniṣad), out of compassion, like a mother; because the truth to be realized is such as can be realized only by the most subtle buddhi (i.e. reason).'

It is only when a man or a woman takes his or her first steps on this road of his or her spiritual growth that the teachings of the *Gītā,* of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Sarada Devi, and of other great spiritual books and teachers become meaningful and attractive to him or her.

10. *Tyāga and Sevā*

This is the beauty and utility of institutions like this college where the very atmosphere gives one the experience of the intangible, yet real, values of life. You may not be able to realize the full significance of this during your student days here. But you will feel its impact increasingly as you grow physically and mentally, as you begin to shoulder your life's responsibilities, individual and social. And when this type of education, complete education, becomes available to increasing numbers of our youths in all parts of India, our nation will acquire, through country-wide implementation of this philosophy of integrated human development, and through the achievement by our millions of the dignity and worth of individuality and its growth and expansion into the large humanness of personality, an unprecedented resource of disciplined and creative human energy.

When you, girls of this college, go out into the wide world, please carry with you Swami Vivekananda's purifying and strengthening message of *tyāga* and *seva,* renunciation and service, renunciation of the 'unripe' ego and manifestation of the 'ripe' ego, and its expression in moods and acts of service. Strengthened thus spiritually, contribute your share, as citizens of our democratic state, to the nation's fight against the thwarting evils of social injustices and social apathy. The philosophy of the *Gītā* will always come to your help and sustenance then. *Meet the challenges of your life with the challenge of its philosophy*. We need to effect vast changes in our society in order to make it healthy and conducive to human growth and fulfilment. It is through the possession of a strong character, with deep and rationally held convictions within, that one becomes capable of making an impact on society. A man or a woman with only a *bundle of opinions* cannot move society; but '*great convictions* are the mothers of great deeds', says Swami Vivekananda and adds: 'A hundred such, and the world becomes revolutionized.'

Swami Vivekananda had great faith in our women; he was also the most constant and consistent champion of the freedom of our women. He had once said that, with the help of ten thousand men, efficient, dedicated, and fearless, he could conquer India's problems, but added that, with only a tenth of that number of women with similar qualities, he could achieve the same much sooner.

By developing their individuality, Western women have achieved, individually, a high measure of the spirit of freedom, equality, energy, and work-efficiency. Our Indian women, on the other hand, have achieved over the centuries the spiritual qualities of love and service. Swami Vivekananda summons our women, as also our men, in the modern age, to combine both these energies in their personality. He asks every one of you today (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda,* p. 84):

> 'Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, energy, and work, and remain a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts?'

Education, properly understood, is the one remedy for all human ills. It involves not only intellectual development but also emotional discipline and enrichment. As you leave this college after lighting your lamps today, and take that light to your homes, you carry also with you my love and best wishes. You will also be carrying another light with you in the two booklets which your college is presenting you with, namely, *Mind Your Manners* and *Science of Human Development: Bhagavad-Gītā.*

11. *Grace of Lakṣmī to Flow from Grace of Sarasvatī*

Our country needs the light of knowledge, both secular and spiritual, which is what we mean when we speak about the grace of *Sarasvatī,* the Goddess of learning. This grace is needed even to achieve wealth and economic and social welfare, which is the grace of *Lakṣmī,* the Goddess of fortune. For all wealth is the product of the application of scientific knowledge to social purposes. Behind all applied science, or science as *fructifera,* lies the energy of pure science, or science as *lucifera,* as the light of knowledge. The former represents *Lakṣmī,* and the latter *Sarasvatī.* In the recent centuries, we in India had separated these two energy resources, these two divine sisters, and had upheld the wrong belief that these were two jealous sisters, and that the presence of one of them in an individual or a society spelt the running away of the other. This is perfectly true if we continue to hold on to our erroneous notion that *Sarasvatī* means mere static knowledge of texts and formulae and *Lakṣmī* means static wealth hidden under the earth, buried under the pillows, or converted into gold ornaments or bullion. This static *Sarasvatī* and this static *Lakṣmī* are certainly incompatible. But these charming and adorable goddesses of our tradition are 'made of sterner stuff', to adapt a well-known expression of Shakespeare. They are dynamic divine energies—the first impelling man to seek truth in the world and in experience, to discipline the mind in detachment, concentration, and precision, and make it capable of penetrating into the mysteries of nature and human life, while the second impelling man to convert that knowledge into power and apply that power to enhance human life, growth, and fulfilment. The modern Western peoples have demonstrated that *Sarasvatī*, as search for verified, verifiable, and communicable knowledge, and *Lakṣmī*, as wealth and welfare arising out of applied knowledge, out of co-operative productive labour, as wealth in productive investment and circulation, are very friendly co-operative sisters. And Swami Vivekananda has told us that the significance of the modern period in our long history lies precisely in the effort in, and in the fruition of, the bringing to our homes and to our society, through his philosophy of practical Vedānta, these two great sisters in friendly and energetic co-operation. This very consummation is also the testament of the *Gītā* as given in its last verse:

Yatra yogeśwaraḥ kṛṣṇaḥ yatra pārtho dhanur-dharaḥ;
Tatra śrī vijayo bhūtiḥ dhruvā-nītiḥ matirmama—

'Where there is Kṛṣna, the master of *Yoga*, and where there is Arjuna, the wielder of the bow, there (in that person, in that society) shall be present wealth, victory, general welfare, and unwavering *nīti* or justice; this is my conviction.'

And Swami Vivekananda summons our nation to this great adventure (*The Complete Works*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, p. 247):

> 'Bring light into the world. ... Bring light to the poor; and bring more light to the rich, for they require it more than the poor. Bring light to the ignorant, and more light to the educated, for the vanities of the education of our time are tremendous!'

12. *Conclusion.*

True education is the seeking and finding of fruitful knowledge. Where this is absent, there will be no trace of the grace of *Sārasvatī* or *Lakṣmī*. This is writ large, in some aspects of modern Indian life, in the widespread cynicism of the intellectuals, the vanity of many of the educated, and the awful social ineffectiveness of both, except in the creation of tensions and problems. Viewing our prevailing educational system against the background of pressing national problems and in the light of the ideal of synthesizing the energies of *Sarasvatī* and *Lakṣmī*, Swami Vivekananda said (*Education*, p. 7):

> Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated. Is this education? ... Open your eyes and see what a pitiable cry for food is rising in the land of Bhārata, proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfil this want? The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion, is it worth the name ?
>
> 'We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet. What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day.
>
> 'The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control, and become fruitful, is called education.'

My thanks and love and best wishes to you all.

7

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL VALUES IN HOME SCIENCE*

1. *Introduction*

I AM extremely happy to address this conference of the Home Science Association of India on 'Spiritual and Moral Values'. Yours is an association which seeks to brighten the home and family, which our nation regards as sacred. To talk on the subject of spiritual and moral values to the members of such an association is most appropriate. It is good for us to realize that the Indian home is still intact; it has not been seriously disrupted yet by the modern transition, though it is undergoing profound changes. The reason for this integrity of the Indian family is the strength of the age-old spiritual tradition of the nation behind it. Spirituality is what enables man and society to withstand shocks and overcome challenges. The more we intensify these spiritual values, therefore, the better will be man and his society. They ensure the manliness of man and the womanliness of woman. During this period of a revolutionary transition, we have to take steps to ensure the primacy of these values in our new social order. Colleges which train students, especially girl students, in Home Science, need to keep in view this pervasive value of spirituality with respect to everything that relates to the home and our emerging social order.

2. *Moral and Spiritual Values: Their Source*

Wherefrom do spiritual and moral values originate? It is obvious that values, other than those involved in the physical survival of an organism, emerge in evolution only at the level of man. They are, therefore, the products of human nature and not of external nature. According to Indian thought, *values are created by man from out of himself in the course of his manipulation and control of the external physical world and the external social environment.*

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* Address given at the VIII Biennial Conference of the Home Science Association of India held at the Viharilal College of Home Science, Calcutta, on 5 October 1966

Nineteenth-century scientific thought tended to mechanize all values and also man. But twentieth-century science is having a new look at the subject. Its revolutionary advances in many fields have tended to destroy the basis of materialism and mechanism as a valid philosophy. The Second World War also contributed to the disillusionment about such facile theories and their social consequences, especially the dehumanization of man. Bertrand Russell voices this post-war disillusionment when he says (*The Impact of Science on Society*, p. 77):

> 'The Machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism.
>
> '... Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

If values are not mechanical, and consequently do ~~not~~ proceed from external physical nature, they must be spiritual; and we must search for them in the depth of human nature itself. *A philosophy of values is a part of, and derives from, a philosophy of man in all his heights and depths.* Vedānta holds that man creates value from within himself in the context of his life and work; that context is provided by the two external environments, natural and social.

Out of the two, he only *manipulates* the first, but both manipulates and *enters*, and is *entered into by*, the second. It is while doing the latter that he becomes the focus of values and experiences fulfilment. Thus values are specifically the products of evolution at the human stage and are spiritual in nature, in the sense that they arise from the inner spiritual nature of man.

3. *The Uniqueness of Man's Social Environment*

Ethical and moral values are spiritual values realized by man initially in the social context. The most enduring and basic element of that context is the home and the family. Early communist thought in the U.S.S.R. tended to belittle and eliminate the universally recognized importance of the family for human growth, and development. But recent thought and social policy in the U.S.S.R. is definitely reversing that earlier trend.

As the most intimate and manageable among the social groups, the family is now almost universally recognized—barring, perhaps, in present-day China— as the indispensable nursery of human morals and manners. What is significant about the home is the sense of intimacy, the sense of belonging, among its members. Here is in evidence the presence of a value which binds individual to individual so as to result in an integrated human edifice, like the cement with respect to the bricks in a building. This is the spiritual value of love and human concern. It is true that in the family context, this love is largely conditioned and limited by the physical and the biological, and is not far removed from the spirit of mutual concern exhibited by a similar animal group. It does not exhibit itself as a non-physical, truly spiritual value. In spite of this limitation, the human family, though thus biologically conditioned, uses this limitation as only a starting point, unlike the animal family which never rises above it. *The significance of the biologically conditioned human family is that it is the training ground for its members, through participation in the wider life of society, for the development of the truly ethical and spiritual forms of love and concern transcending not only the family, but even the entire human species, and embracing all living things.*

4. *Ethical and Moral Sense:*
A by-product of Man's Spiritual Growth

This training of man in the family and the social contexts introduces us to the idea of an *inner growth* and *development* of man apart from his more obvious physical growth and development, and deeper than what is achieved by his mere accumulation of knowledge and information. This is his growth in his spiritual dimension, whereby he *expands* beyond his largely fixed genetic and biological constitution and *enters*, and *is entered into by*, thousands of other human beings. *This surpassing of himself by man is the sign of his spiritual growth.* If he does not do so, he is in the grip of spiritual stagnation and death, in spite of whatever grandeur may be found in his physical and intellectual life. As sung by Wordsworth:

> 'Unless he erects himself above himself,
> How poor a thing is man!'

The first fruit of this inner spiritual growth is morality and the ethical sense; the second fruit is art and aesthetic sensibility; and the third and finest fruit is spiritual realization. At every stage, man becomes an increasingly efficient creator of values from within himself through his interaction with and manipulation of his external natural and social environments, which he increasingly enriches and enlivens in turn, resulting in the qualitative improvement of human life and its social *milieu.* At every stage, what is achieved is the steady manifestation of an infinite and divine dimension of his personality—what Vedānta terms the Atman, the infinite, immortal, and ever-illumined Self of man. And that is the true meaning of education and religion, says Vedānta. Both are processes of education, one its earlier and the other its later stages, by which the perfection imbedded within man is steadily made manifest through the removal of obstructions. Every man is his own educator: *Atmano guruḥ ātmaiva,* says the *Srīmad Bhāgavatam* (XI. 7.20); external teachers and books are but subsidiary aids.

5. *Organic Evolution and Ethics*

And this Vedāntic picture of human destiny is receiving increasing endorsement from twentieth-century scientific thought, especially from its biological side. In the nineteenth century, the concepts of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest dominated biology in its picture of evolution; it had, accordingly, no place for moral and ethical values which, as Thomas Huxley, Darwin's close collaborator and interpreter, showed in his *The Struggle for Existence in Human Society* and *Prolegomena to Evolution and Ethics,* involves not 'the survival of the fittest' but 'making as many as possible fit to survive', and involves also 'the repudiation of the gladiatorial theory of existence'. Nineteenth-century concept of evolution could find nothing in man or nature to account for the phenomenon of ethical and moral sense, and left philosophers to construct various contractual theories of ethics based on mere self-interest, including enlightened self-interest. This was at the back of the thorough-going materialism and open or veiled hedonism of that century.

This facile philosophy, with its highly circumscribed concept of human nature and destiny, received a severe jolt, as much from the scientific developments of the present century as from its catastrophic political and economic crisis. If twentieth-century physics has tended to shatter the theoretical basis of materialism, twentieth-century biology is tending to free man from his mechanistic and hedonistic strait jacket and restore to him his spiritual integrity and destiny.

6. *Psycho-Social Evolution and Ethics*

In a lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision' given at a week-long conference of scientists discussing the subject of 'Evolution after Darwin' at the Chicago University in 1959, Sir Julian Huxley highlighted some of these revolutionary advances which the theory of evolution has registered during the last hundred years since the Publication of Darwin's monumental work: *The Origin of Species.* In that speech, which 'ultimately became the most controversial event of the celebration week', as the preface to the volume puts it, Huxley said (*Evolution after Darwin,* Vol. III, Chicago University Press, 1960, p. 251):

> 'Man's evolution is not biological but psychosocial; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by break-throughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization, of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization.'

7. *Quality versus Quantity*

Stressing the importance of quality as the criterion of evolution at the human stage, he further said *(ibid.,* p.252):

> 'Man is therefore of immense significance. ... He is a reminder of the existence, here and there, in the quantitative vastness of cosmic matter and its energy equivalents, a trend towards mind, with its accompaniment of quality and richness of existence—and, what is more, a proof of the importance of mind and quality in the all-embracing evolutionary process.'

And presenting the concept of fulfilment as the aim of human evolution, and criticizing the view that organic satisfactions are the be-all and end-all of human life, he said *(ibid.,* P. 259):

> 'But, like population explosion, this consumption explosion cannot continue much longer; it is an inherently self-defeating process. Sooner, rather than later, we must get away from a system based on artificially increasing the number of human wants and set about constructing one aimed at the qualitative satisfaction of

real human needs, spiritual and mental as well as material and physiological. This means abandoning the pernicious habit of evaluating every human project solely in terms of its utility—by which the evaluators mean solely its material utility, and especially its utility in making a profit for somebody.

'Once we truly believe (and true belief, however necessary, is rarely easy) that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for more human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only upto a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or TV sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, not an end in itself.'

8. *The Family and Psycho-social Evolution*

Man is therefore of immense significance, says Julian Huxley. It has its corollary in the social wisdom which says that the home is of immense significance; and what constitutes the home is not the building but the human beings within it, especially the queen who presides over it, its woman: *Na gṛhaṁ gṛham ityāhuḥ gṛhiṇī gṛham ucyate.* The home is the nursery of the nation's morals. Indian sociology speaks of the home as an *āshrama,* the venue of moral and spiritual striving, where lives and functions the *gṛhastha,* householder or citizen. This moral and spiritual striving is what constitutes the driving force behind man's evolutionary advance by which he, though genetically fixed and socially conditioned, becomes mentally unconditioned and spiritually free.

9. *Man's Double Inheritance: Genetic Versus Cultural*

The first significant break-through in evolution occurred when the living cell appeared. Twentieth-century biology calls the living cell *self-duplicating matter.* Starting with the living cell, organic evolution continued for millions and millions of years until a second significant break-through occurred with the appearance of man possessing the capacity to create culture and tradition through his powers of thinking and speech communication. Culture is specifically a human phenomenon; it arises from the storing and transmission of experience. Animals have experience; but their brain is not developed enough to manifest thought; it cannot store experiences, communicate them through speech, and transmit them. Nature evolved these mental powers in the human brain, giving man the capacity to cumulatively reproduce and vary his experiences and transmit them to future generations. This is culture and tradition which twentieth-century biology, therefore, significantly terms *self-duplicating mind*. Man shares with the animals in his physical heredity through the genes. But he is unique in having a second heredity through the mind. The first is largely fixed and is conservative in its operation; while the second is resilient and creative, marking man's uniqueness among all living species. And twentieth-century biology definitely proclaims that the supreme opportunity for man lies in the second. Therein lies a possibility of growth and development for man far more significant and pervasive than what is possible at his physical level. It is this second inheritance that discloses the presence in man of a unique focus of freedom, his inalienable spiritual nature, and that makes education the most significant activity in a human society. What is fixed and final cannot be 'educated'; what is resilient and free can be. Functioning from a genetically fixed physical base, education registers the growth and manifestation of that resilient and free dimension of man's personality which we term the human spirit. Where this is not achieved, education is no education from the standpoint of that uniqueness above referred to, which marks man off from the rest of nature's evolutionary products.

10. *The Home as the Venue of a Double Education*

Like man himself with his double inheritance, the home or the family, according to Indian social thought, also presents a double aspect—a static base and a dynamic superstructure. The first denotes the intimate, and apparently exclusive, biological setting of the family constellation of mother, father, and children, while the second denotes its flowering in ethical and spiritual awareness, and social identification and sympathy, which education, secular and religious, achieves for its members. By using his body as an instrument of his life's purposes, man becomes spiritually liberated. But the body becomes the tomb of his spirit if it dominates him and makes him selfish and self-centred. The home also becomes similarly the venue of his liberation if he is not attached to it but uses it as a base for advancing ethically and spiritually. Otherwise, the home becomes the venue of his spiritual stagnation and death when man becomes selfish and worldly, with vision and interests circumscribed within the small genetic constellation of the family.

In virtue of the home being the venue of such an education in spiritual growth and social service, the *gṛha,* the home, and the *gṛhastha, the householder or citizen, are highly praised in Indian thought.* Says the great law-giver Manu (*Manu-Smrti*, 6.90):

Yathā nadīnadā sarve sāgare yānti saṁsthitim;
Tathaiva āśramiṇaḥ sarve gṛhasthe yānti saṁsthitim—

'Just as rivers and streams find their refuge in the ocean, so also the members of all *āśramas* or social orders (such as *brahmacārin,* student, *vānaprasthin,* ascetic, and *sannyāsin,* monk) find their refuge in the *gṛhastha.*'

11. *Conclusion*

Increasing liberation of spiritual and moral values in the context of life and action is what imparts meaning and significance to all life and action which, without it, becomes, in the words of Shakespeare, reduced to, 'a tale told by an idiot'. Indian spiritual thought upholds that the struggle to achieve this liberation is the one sure path of all-round life fulfilment for man everywhere.

8

ETHICAL AND SOCIAL VALUES IN EDUCATION*

1. *Introductory*

We have met together in this national seminar to discuss a theme, relevant and vital as much to the nations abroad as to our own nation. I am glad to find that we have a galaxy of our thinkers and patriots, drawn from the fields of education, politics, administration, and social service, to participate in the seminar, bringing their experience and wisdom to light up our nation's path of human development and fulfilment, which is the goal of all true education, for a seventh of the human population.

Among all the disciplines for human development such as education, politics, economics, administration, industry, and commerce, the most creative and dynamic, and yet the most silent and pervasive, is what we are gathered here to discuss, namely, education, including what we have excluded from our theme of discussion, namely, religion which is, when scientifically considered and not ethnically, only continued education as the spiritual growth of man beyond his or her physical and intellectual growth dimensions. And I shall try to discuss in this paper, briefly, the intimate bearing of this subject of spiritual growth on our current discussion theme of *inculcation of ethical and social values in education.* Education has vital reference to the health, or otherwise, of both the individual and his or her social context.

What is the nature of the national society that is waiting to receive the Indian youth after completing his or her institutional or formal education? And what is the type of youth that our educational institutions are sending out into the nation? These are the two vital questions that people in our education and our politics and administration should raise and answer today.

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* Keynote Address at The National Seminar on *Inculcation of Ethical and Social Values in Education* held at the Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore-20, on 5 February 1980

2. *The Revolutionary Context of Modern India*

What we see all around us in modern India is a rapid modernization of our ancient society, in which we can catch the crumblings of many of our old social edifices and the attitudes that sustained them, and of the coming up of new and modern edifices, without, however, the strength of the new and modern attitudes in adequate measure to sustain them. It is already evident that the modern transition in India is not going to be a mere patchwork affair, particularly in the social field, as all such transitions have been in our long past history. It is undoubtedly going to be a revolutionary change. Swami Vivekananda, one of its most authentic and outstanding leaders and spokesmen, in his Madras lecture on *My Plan of Campaign* in 1897, has referred to his concept of it as *root and branch reform,* in contrast with other contemporary national leaders who wanted to 'reform only little bits':

> 'You must go down to the basis of the thing, to the very root of the matter. That is what I call radical reform. Put the fire there, and let it burn upwards and make an Indian Nation.'

In the same lecture, a little later, he had also said,

> 'I do not believe in reform. I believe in growth.'

Conveying the Swami's vision of the India of the future rising out of these revolutionary changes of the modern period, and characterizing that change as a *growth from within,* his famous English disciple Sister Nivedita says in her book: *The Master As I Saw Him* (pp. 201-202):

> 'I asked him, in the morning, to tell me in broad outline, what he felt to be the points of difference between his own schemes for the good of India and those preached by others. It was inpossible to draw him out on this subject. On the contrary, he expressed appreciation of certain personal characteristics and lines of conduct adopted by some of the leaders of other schools, and I regarded the question as dismissed. Suddenly, in the evening, he returned to the subject on his own accord.
>
> ' "I disagree with all those" he said, "who are giving their superstitions back to my people. Like the Egyptologist's interest in Egypt, it is easy to feel an interest in India that is purely selfish. One may desire to see again the India of one's books, one's studies, one's dreams. *My* hope is to see again the strong points of that India, reinforced by the strong points of this age, only in a natural way. The new state of things must *be a growth from within.*"

In the same book, a few pages later, Nivedita refers to the

Swami's own words relating to the restructuring of the Indian tradition in the modern age and the vital place he accords to education in that process (p. 203):

> ' "Hitherto, the great fault of our Indian religion has lain in its knowing only two words: renunciation and *Mukti* (Salvation). Only '*Mukti*' here! Nothing for the householder! But these are the very people whom I want to help. And so *strength must come to the nation through education*." '

And Nivedita significantly comments:

> 'I thought at the time, and I think increasingly as I consider it, that this one talk of the master had been well worth the whole voyage, to have heard.'

3. *Need to Correct Our erstwhile Neglect of Social Ethics*

By and large, the object of human life as renunciation of the world and the attainment of *Mukti* or salvation, presented to our people during the last few centuries, was an ascetic path, so high and transcendental, that it left millions of them, all except a small minority, mentally and spiritually ill-nourished and often wrongly nourished, because it had no message for them and was indigestible to them; there was very little stress on social ethics, along with its civic and social virtues and responsibilities, which they could understand and digest, and from which they could derive profit to brighten their life on the earth below. Religion, as presented in the *Gītā* on the other hand, is a full philosophy of life which included this positivist dimension of *dharma,* or social ethics, as *abhyudaya,* or social welfare arising from it, along with *Mukti* or *Mokṣa,* or spiritual liberation, as *nisśreyasa,* or trans-social supreme welfare, which constitutes the mystical dimensions of religion. The latter concerns only a small minority of the human population in any society. But the former concerns all and is inseparable from society and civilization. *Dharma,* or social ethics, treats man as a member of a social group, interacting with each other and with the external social environment, enriching it economically, politically, and culturally, and getting enriched in turn in character-efficiency, political awareness, and social and human concern, all those virtues and graces which we call *ethical excellence.*

We failed to stress this whole gamut of social virtues and graces, and to impart the relevant secular education which is the source of them. Instead, we stressed an other-worldly excellence with its passive virtues, with inaction as its watchword; we failed to understand that social welfare comes from an activist ethics in the context of interaction with other members in society. The result was that we failed to achieve the more attainable ideals of character, work-efficiency, public spirit, and general well-being, while equally failing to achieve the high ideal of *mukti* and the virtues and graces associated with so great an ideal. The high spiritual *inaction* of the *mukti* path and ideal became deformed into laziness, inertia, and human unconcern, along with a type of worldliness, or 'a piety-fringed worldliness' as I prefer to call it, more harmful than the worldliness of the modern Western type, which has at least character-efficiency and human concern to enrich it. We failed to realize that to climb the Mount Everest of *Mukti*, one must first climb the several foothills of lesser and more easily attainable life ideals, as taught by the *Gītā: Na karmaṇām, anārambhāt naiskarmyaṁ puruṣośnute*—'Man cannot profit from the discipline of inaction, or meditation, without the prior discipline of action.'

Today, our education should aim to produce in our people these virtues and graces which go to make a citizen in the true sense of the word. *This is a new concept of human excellence for us*, or a new understanding of an ancient concept of human excellence as expounded in the *Gitā*. The citizen is a *person*, and not a mere *individual*, as defined by the late biologist and humanist Sir Julian Huxley, who says that

> 'Persons are individuals who transcend their mere organic individuality in conscious social participation.'

He lives in a society of other human beings, responds to them and seeks responses from them; and in this process, he develops a type of character and excellence which has, according to the *Gitā*, a tremendous spiritual appeal in it. Our people have been more concerned with their relationship with god, or with an image of god in a temple or other religious places, than with man the nextdoor neighbour, with whom our people would more often collide, than co-operate for general human well-being. Our education today must help us to develop in our people a new type of excellence that would make for the *gṛhastha,* or the house-holder, *spiritually growing into the citizen;* a genetically limited individual growing beyond his or her genetic limitations of outlook and sympathy and response, and growing into a national and human awareness and responsibility.

4. *Vivekananda on 'Education for Growth from Within'*

What are the characteristics of such an education for our nation that can initiate and fulfil that process of natural *growth from within* through a *root and branch reform?* This is elucidated by Swami Vivekananda in words that find place in a small book of selections entitled *Education,* which Mahatma Gandhi introduces to the readers with the words:

> 'Surely, Vivekananda's utterances do not need introduction from anybody. They make their own irresistible appeal.'

> 'Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated? Is this education? Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata, proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfil this want? The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name?

> 'We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.

> 'What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of knowledge that is our own and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education, and all else that will develop industries, so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day.

> 'The end and aim of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man *grow*. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education.'

In the above words, we have the keynote ideas relating to the subject of our seminar, namely, *ethical and social values in education.*

The relationship of ethical and social values to education is intimate and integral. This becomes clear when we seek an answer to the two questions, namely, wherefrom do ethical and social values originate? and what really constitutes education? To deal with the second question first; It is now universally accepted that education is not ramming information into the child, like thrashing an ass to transform it into a horse! It is not stuffing the brain, but training the mind—training it in the capacity to scout for facts and information, to organize them into knowledge by finding their interrelations and significance, and to use that knowledge to enhance life, individual and collective. It is the science of unfolding the inherent capacities and powers of the child, through intelligent interaction with its natural and social environments. This is expressed by Swami Vivekananda in one of his profound utterances:

> 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already within man.'

The role of the teacher, and of all the institutional frame-work, is only as subsidiary aids to help the child to overcome the obstacles to this manifestation. Education, thus, is child-centred, and not school-centred or book-centred.

Compare the above ideas of Vivekananda with the words which the Unesco-sponsored International Commission on the Development of Education, with The Prime Minister and Education Minister of France, Edgar Faure, as Chairman, has to say, as to the goals of education, in its report entitled: *Learning to be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow:* 1972 (pp. 156-57):

> 'The physical, intellectual, emotional, and ethical integration of the individual into a complete man is a broad definition of the fundamental aim of education. ... The truer he is to himself, the more closely he follows the laws of his nature and his own calling, the nearer he comes to humanity's common calling and, in addition, the better able he is to communicate with other people'.

5. *Message of Renunciation and Service*

Therefore, the one subject that should hold our attention today is this subject of man and the subject of healthy inter-human relationships. What is the form of inter-human relationship that is conducive to general happiness and welfare? Man has exploited his fellow human beings throughout history. We are generally familiar only with one type of exploitation, namely, the economic, which has been highlighted by Marx and his school of thought. But exploitation can be, and has been, of other types as well. Whatever surplus resources a man possesses, he can easily use them to exploit other people. The other alternative is to utilise one's surplus energy, intelligence, wealth, and power to *serve* other people, to enhance the life of other people. Why has our nation chosen the first instead of the second alternative since our independence? Swami Vivekananda had proclaimed about seventy years ago:

> 'Renunciation and service are the twin ideals of India. Intensify her in those channels, the rest will take care of itself.'

Renunciation, as renunciation of the world, as ascetic renunciation, with a view to achieving *mukti* or transcendental liberation, is relevant only to a small number of people in any society, including our own. But renunciation, as renunciation of the lower self, with a view to developing character and public spirit and the attitude of service, is integral to citizenship in a democracy as a universal value. In the wake of our great national renaissance of the last century, the country did inspire itself with this spirit of renunciation and service and threw up bands and bands of dedicated workers in all parts of India for the cause of India's freedom and India's nation-building. As a result of their contributions, the country became free and ended its centuries-long stagnation and slavery in 1947. Why we failed to continue in that great mood and temper thereafter is a mystery. It is amazing how our people, emerging from the darkness of their slavery of centuries to the light of freedom, could easily forget the lessons and warnings of their history and cease to be creative! History is replete with instances of nations bursting with creative energy on emerging from a spell of political slavery.

The classical example of this is Athens of the fifth century B. C. When it succeeded, by united and sustained struggle, in defeating its Persian invaders and freeing itself from their brief but deeply galling yoke, Athenian democracy experienced an ecstasy of freedom which issued forth, during the next 50 years, in an outburst of creative activity in every department of its national life—cultural, social, political, and artistic—which has brightened not only its own but all subsequent Western history as well.

Why did we fail to experience a similar sustained ecstasy of delight on the attainment of freedom, not after a brief spell of slavery as in the case of Athens, but after centuries of slavery, and why did we allow our creative energies to dry up within a few brief years of independence? With the drying up of our creative spirit, we soon slipped back into our erstwhile stagnant ways, into moods of complacency and ways of selfishness and self-centredness. This is the tragedy of our brief post-independence history. And we have paid the price in shocks of military defeats, economic disasters, political disintegrations, and social upheavals. Where everyone sought only his or her own happiness, no one is happy today.

6. *Conclusion*

This, the spiritual growth of man, is a fact; the more we know the science and technique of this growth, the better for us, for our education and for our nation. Physical and intellectual growth we know and recognize, the second less palpably than the first; and our education is consciously, though haltingly, endeavouring to provide these two to our people. A baby is born with about seven pounds of body weight. Every day it increases in weight, It drinks its mother's milk, to be followed by other types of nourishing food and drink; and it grows steadily, until it becomes a full-grown healthy man or woman of 150 or 200 pounds weight. This is the palpable physical growth of man; and we ensure it by appropriate means of physical nourishment. Equally important, though less obvious, is his mental growth. A village boy is timid and without confidence. He is sent to school. Within a few weeks, he gains knowledge, in alertness, in self-confidence. He develops a sense of his individual worth and dignity and freedom, and this continues until he becomes, may be, an intellectual giant, or a giant of will; this is the mental growth of man, which we ensure through appropriate mental nourishment—through education, institutional and non-institutional.

These two types of growth are necessary, but not sufficient. There is a third growth of man to be ensured by all true education, most vital and significant but least recognized, without which the other two will prove his undoing; without which his search for fulfilment will result in unfulfilment and defeat, not only for himself but also for his or her society. This is his or her spiritual growth, which finds expression in ethical awareness and social feeling and the **humanistic impulse, to begin with, and finds its consummation, says *Vedāntā,* in the experience by him or her of the infinite, universal,** and divine dimension of his or her personality, the Ātman. This is education for complete human development and fulfilment, says India's purest and maturest wisdom of *adhyātma-vidyā,* the science of man in depth, or the science of human possibilities. When our education is lit up even a little by the light of this profound science of man, we shall witness the transformation of the *largest* democracy, which is the dubious international status of our country today, into the *greatest* democracy.

That ethical and social values are but the by-product of man's spiritual growth is the teaching of the Upaniṣads. It is the manifestation of his inherent divine nature, as reiterated by Swami Vivekananda again and again. In his lecture on 'My Plan of Campaign', he said (*Complete Works,* Vol III, p. 225):

> 'The greatest truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as your own existence. The truths of the Upaniṣads are before you. Take them up, live up to them, and the salvation of India will be at hand.'

9

ETHICAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES *

1. *Introduction*

We are meeting in this colloquium to discuss what today is the most important problem facing our nation, namely, the toning up of our individual and collective life. The general theme of the colloquium is 'Ethical and Spiritual Values as the Basis of National Integration'. This subject will be discussed in its several aspects by the sections of the colloquium. Our own section, which heads the list, is called upon to discuss what the organizers consider the most fundamental aspect of the theme, namely, 'Ethical and Spiritual Values'. I invite you to contribute your best to the discussion on this theme, so that our nation may benefit substantially from our deliberations. The responsibility we have accepted to shoulder is heavy; let us approach it in a spirit of prayerful humility and calm determination.

The subject we are called upon to discuss is of vital interest not only to us in India but also to people in all parts of the world. No society can exist and progress without fostering ethical and spiritual values in its population. They constitute the integrating principle in any society, primitive or advanced. Like the cement that holds together seperate bricks so as to produce the integrated structure of a building, ethical and spiritual values help to hold together separate individuals in a social organism, which then ceases to become a mere collection of separate individuals, like the building which has ceased to be just a pile of separate bricks.

2. *The Source of Ethical and Spiritual Values*

The problem of fostering ethical and spiritual values in a society raises the question of the source of these values. It is precisely in this field that sharp differences of opinion have developed in the modern age leading to utter confusion and bewilderment. Broadly speaking, these differences reduce themselves to two viewpoints, one of which holds that matter or outer nature is the focus of all values and the other which affirms man as that focus. The first leads to undue emphasis on the creation, possession, and enjoyment of material wealth and the search for organic satisfactions, whereas the second, while putting due emphasis on the above, leads to the pursuit of values and satisfactions lying beyond the sensate level of life, and to the experience by man of spiritual freedom and integrity. Man, however, is both the creator and enjoyer, and if we may add, even the destroyer, of all values, material as well as what lies above and beyond it. This truth of the primacy of man is getting increasing recognition from contemporary world-thought. Indian thought has always upheld the view that all values proceed not from matter but from the spirit of man. This finds endorsement today from several modern thinkers who, while accepting 'matter' as a useful and convenient concept for the scientific investigation of the world of experience, consider 'materialism' an unscientific intruder, a crude dogma, leading to the evil of the mechanization of man and the destruction of the beauty and worth of his personality.

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* Address at the 'Ethical and Spiritual Values' section of the All India Colloquium on *Ethical and Spiritual Values as the Basis of National Integration,* held at, and under the auspices of, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, from 30 December 1966 to 3 January 1967

3. *Scientists against the Dogma of Materialism*

In the protesting words of Bertrand Russell *(The Impact of Science on Society*, p. 77):

> 'The machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism. ... Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

In the still stronger words of Thomas Huxley a century earlier *(Methods and Results,* pp. 164-65):

> 'If we find that the ascertainment of the order of nature is facilitated by using one terminology, or one set of symbols, rather than another, it is our clear duty to use the former; and no harm can accrue, so long as we bear in mind that we are dealing merely with terms and symbols. ...
>
> 'But the man of science who, forgetting the limits of philosophical inquiry, slides from these formulae and symbols into what is commonly understood by materialism, seems to me to place himself on a level with the mathematician who should mistake the x's and y's with which he works his problems, for real entities, and with this further

> disadvantage, as compared with the mathematician, that the blunders of the latter are of no practical consequence, while the errors of systematic materialism may paralyse the energies and destroy the beauty of a life.'

Says astrophysicist R. A. Millikan in his *Autobiography* (last chapter):

> 'To me a philosophy of materialism is the height of unintellignce.'

4. *Evolution and Ethics*

Dealing with the purpose of evolution in the light of twentieth-century biology, Julian Huxley says (Essay on 'Emergence of Darwinism', *Evolution after Darwin,* Vol. I, University of Chicago Press, p. 21):

> 'In the light of our present knowledge, man's most comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of organization or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment —the fuller realization of more possibilities by the human species collectively and more of its component members individually.'

Referring to the emergence of quality as the criterion of evolution at the human stage, Huxley says in his lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision' (*ibid*, Vol. III, p. 251):

> 'Man's evolution is not biological but psycho-social; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by break-throughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization.'

Further (*ibid*, pp. 260-261):

> 'Evolutionary truth ... shows us our destiny and our duty. It shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality'.

5. *Ethical Importance of the Social Context*

If values are not mechanical, and do not rise from the material environment, they must be spiritual and must be sought for in the depths of the human personality. *Indian spiritual thought holds that all values are created by man from out of the depths of his personality through the intelligent manipulation of his material and social environment.* Increasing liberation of values from the depths of his personality makes for his intellectual, artistic, and ethical growth and development. This is the line of human evolution in which quality becomes the criterion of progress, unlike in the pre-human stage in which quantity was dominant over quality.

Ethical values find manifestation in the context of interaction between human beings in a society. Ethics, therefore, is inseparable from the social context and *vice versa*. It is the cementing factor referred to earlier, uniting man with man in society. This is what Indian thought calls *dharma,* in one of its two aspects, namely, the aspect of *abhyudaya* or social welfare, the other aspect being its trans-social spiritual dimension, ***niḥsreyasa*** or spiritual liberation. The *Mahābhārata*, therefore, defines *dharma* in its aspect as *abhyudaya* as 'that which holds together, that which sustains, all human beings' (VIII. 45.50): *dhāraṇat dharmam ityāhuḥ, dharmo dhārayati prajāḥ*.

6. *The Nature and significance of Moral Experience*

The moral impulse finds expression in an outward movement of love and concern for the other man. This is well expressed in the great utterance of Jesus: 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Among the various facts of the universe, this moral impulse stands as a unique fact of great significance. 'Two things fill me with wonder', said Kant, 'the starry heavens above and the moral law within.' It discloses a more-than-physical and biological level to the human personality. At the physical and biological levels, man's concern for the other is conditioned and limited by the purely genetic element in human relationships. This concern dries up beyond that relationship. But it is beyond that limited relationship that the moral impulse finds its own specific expression. To the statement. 'love thy neighbour as thyself', the human heart responds with a question: Who is my neighbour? Facts of moral experience of all humanity reveal an amazing diversity in the answers given by the human heart to this question. From the raw worldly individual, who sees his neighbour only in those who are physically related to him and subserve his own interests, to a Buddha or Jesus or Ramakrishna, who take in all beings in their all-embracing, self-effacing love and concern, through any number of levels in between, we have an amazing variety and quality of moral experience which pose a challenge to human intelligence.

7. *Man: Sensate versus Spiritual*

In seeking a meaning to this bewildering variety and quality of moral experience, ethics is slowly led to the recognition of the complex texture of the human personality and a spiritual dimension to it behind its obvious sensate one. The sensate man is essentially self-centred, and his love and concern for his neighbour is dictated by prudence and expediency. Ethics deriving sanction from this level of moral experience finds expression in various social contract theories. But such theories, it is obvious, do not cover all data of moral experience. Even within the limitation of social contract, the impulse which moves one *to stick to a contract* does not proceed from the sensate level of his personality but from a deeper source. This is his spiritual dimension, the one source of all his higher impulses—moral, ethical, aesthetic, and rational. The sensate man, left to himself, would rather *break a contract* when it suits him than *keep it*. But the moral man will rise, or at least struggle to rise, above that impulse to self-aggrandizing expediency, disclosing a higher dimension to his personality, long suppressed, but waiting to be expressed.

8. *Rational Ethics to be Derived from Human Nature Itself*

It was facts and considerations such as these that led Indian thought in its Vedānta to insist that all rational ethical theories should derive their sanction not from any external source but from human nature itself, from human nature which has been subjected to a through investigation from the surface to the depths. A rational theory of ethical values must be based on a total philosophy of man. Such an investigation will give different answers as to his nature at different levels; the answer from any one such level will be a true answer, but only of man at that level, and not man as a whole. Ethics of positivism, such as hedonism, social contract, enlightened self-interest, utilitarianism, etc., belong to this category. All ethics of transcendentalism emphasize, on the other hand, renunciation and self-effacement, which imply the distinction between a lower self and a higher self. Both types of ethics are ethics of self-realization depending upon which self is meant.

9. *Ethical Sense: A by-product of Man's Spiritual Growth*

A complete philosophy of man will embrace all these moral phenomena and explain them in the light of evolution, which, at the human stage, as pointed out by Julian Huxley in the passage quoted earlier, ceases to be organic or biological, but becomes psycho-social, enthroning quality over quantity. Progress in the case of man is, in the light of the above criterion, progress in unselfishness, social feeling, non-aggressiveness, and inner fulfilment. These ethical values are the products of the spiritual growth and development of man. *This is the specific field of human evolution according to Vedānta and also, as pointed out earlier, according to the higher reaches of modern Western thought.*

Vedānta proclaims that there is such a thing as the *spiritual growth* of man; this is more significant than his more obvious physical growth. The scope of the latter is severely limited by his genetic inheritance, which is the product of the first major break-through in evolution, namely, the appearance of the living cell, or as biologists term it, of self-duplicating matter. But the evolution has achieved in man a second more significant break-through namely, culture and tradition, involving accumulation and transmission of experience through his newly acquired powers of thought and speech communication. Culture, which biologists term self-duplicating mind, is specifically a human phenomenon, in virtue of which man becomes heir to a second inheritance, namely, cultural, over and above his genetic or physical inheritance. It is this second inheritance that makes for the uniqueness of man; through it, man becomes capable of rising above his physical limitations and achieving unlimited personality expansion through the expansion of his awareness and sympathy. This highlights the importance of this second inheritance for education, ethics, and religion. In the wake of this second break-through, 'the character of evolution', says Julian Huxley, 'now became cultural instead of genetic or biological'.

All ethical values are essentially spiritual values; they proceed from the trans-sensual dimension of the human personality. This dimension, which stimulates the *dhārmika* or ethical sense, is beyond the reach of animals and of such humans who, like animals, are content to live at the sensate level: *dharmeṇa hīnā paśubhiḥ samānāḥ*, as the *Hitopadeśa*, (verse 25, Introduction) pointedly expresses it. In actual fact, however, no human being is entirely without this stimulus; everyone receives 'intimations of immortality', as Wordsworth expresses it, some time or other in his life. But it is stifled by his sensate nature which is the venue of life-stagnation for individuals as well as societies; creative life lies just above this level. In order to achieve quality, the tyranny of this sensate nature has to be overcome.

10. *The Gītā and a Comprehensive Spiritual Education of Man*

That is the work of spiritual education; part of this education is achieved in the social context through the ethics of mutuality and interdependence: *parasparaṁ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha,* as the *Gītā* puts it (III.11). This is the economic, social and political fields of human action and endeavour, in which man trains himself in strength and steadiness of character and social efficiency. The rest of this education is the concern of religion, understood not as dogma or creed, not as socio-political discipline and conformity, but as spiritual experiment and experience by which man achieves spiritual efficiency. The technique of the former is a man-ward movement finding expression in intelligent work in cooperation with one's fellowmen, and of the latter is an inward penetration through concentration and meditation in aloneness and silence. A comprehensive spirituality embraces action and contemplation, man in society and man in solitude, man at work and man at worship. This is the unique contribution of the *Bhagavad Gītā.*

In a brief statement of Vedāntic faith, Swami Vivekananda expresses the central theme of such a comprehensive spirituality in which ethical values of the outer socio-political fields blend with the spiritual values of the inner field of religion (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, p.124):

> 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling nature, external (by science, technology, and socio-political processes) and internal (by the technique of concentration and meditation). Do this ... and BE FREE.'

11. Ethical Awareness: Contemporary India versus thc West

Our nation today presents a general picture of ethical and spiritual malnutrition. Vast sections of our men and women have all but lost touch with the strengthening and purifying spiritual tradition of our own hoary culture. This is sad enough. But *what is sadder still is that we have also largely failed to get ethically nourished and strengthened by our experience of socio-political action as a free people these two decades*. These ethical opportunities have failed to develop, in an adequate measure, citizenship responsibilities and civic virtues and graces in our people, young and old, in spite of our advantage of the close association with, and the bright examples of, modern Western nations which, without claiming to be saintly or spiritual, have achieved more spirituality of ethical values and character-efficiency than we with all the backing of our undoubtedly rich spiritual inheritance of the past ages, reinforced, in the modern age, by the life and message of a galaxy of spiritual and ethical giants like Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, Ram-Mohun Roy and Mahatma Gandhi.

12. *Bhartṛhari's Social Classification: Its Contemporary Relevance*

The delineation of ethical types in a society by poet-king Bhartrhari over thirteen hundred years ago may help us to see the maladies of our own society today in clear perspective (*Nitiśataka*, 74):

Eke satpuruṣaḥ parārthaghaṭakāḥ
svārthān parityajya ye,
sāmānyāstu parārthamudyamabhṛtāḥ
svārthāvirodhena ye:
Te'mī mānavarākṣasāḥ parahitaṁ
svārthāya nīghnanti ye,
ye tu ghnanti nirarthakaṁ parahitaṁ
te ke na jānīmahe —

'There are the *satpuruṣas*, good people, who bring about other people's welfare sacrificing their own interests; the generality of people are those who strive to ensure other people's welfare if it does not involve sacrificing their own self-interest. There are these others who are *mānavarākṣasās*, veritable human demons, who destroy other people's welfare to ensure their own self-interest; but alas! how am I to delineate those others who destroy other people's welfare without any gain (accruing to themselves or to any one else)?'

The first type, those who practise the ethics of self-effacement and universal love, of renunciation and service, constitutes a small minority in any society; they are those who seek death, and achieve resurrection thereby, so that others may live and thrive. They are *the salt of the earth*. The large majority of people, the *sāmānyāḥ*, the generality, however, belongs to the second type, namely, those who practise the ethics of what modern political philosphy calls *enlightened* self-interest. To the third type belongs all those who indulge in all kinds of anti-social practices, practices inherited from past ages and practices being newly invented in this age, such as bribery, corruption, food and drug adulteration, and so forth; these are well described by the poet as *mānavarākṣasās*. The fourth and last category is the poet's despair!. It is a class entirely unethical and, happily, a minority in any society, given to wanton anti-social violence and destruction.

The problem of our society today arises from the mass manufacture of the third and fourth types, especially since our attainment of political freedom after centuries of subjection. This is what poses a challenge to our education and religion, our politics and social life. And this challenge has to be met by mobilizing all the ethical and spiritual resources of the nation, inherited from our own past and acquired from our modern experience. We as a nation must resolutely take steps to preserve and nourish the ever-present small minority of the first type, the *Brāhmaṇa* type as described by Śri Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā and Bhagavān* Buddha in the *Dhammapada;* we must ethically fortify and spiritually strengthen the second type—the type that pursues the way of enlightened self-interest—by injecting more *enlightenment* into its self-interest so as to prevent its members from sliding down and augmenting the third type; this third type—the *mānavarākṣasās*—must be severely thinned, if not eliminated; and, finally, the very appearance of the fourth must be prevented.

13. Conclusion

The need of our time cannot be more adequately conveyed than in the following utterance of Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on 'Vedānta and its Application to Indian Life' delivered in Madras in 1897 (*Complete Works,* Vol.III, Eighth Edition, p.247):

> 'Bring all light into the world. ... Bring light to the poor; and bring more light to the rich, for they require it more than the poor. Bring light to the ignorant, and more light to the educated, for the vanities of the education of our time are tremendous!'

Our nation has that light; it has enough spiritual resources within it to restore it to moral health and vigour. It is the duty and privilege of every citizen, and more especially of every educated citizen, of free India, to lay hold of these resources and, strengthening himself or herself, pass on that strength to the nation at large. Let the words of Vivekananda be our clarion call: 'Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached!'

10

PSYCHO-SOCIAL EVOLUTION AND MODERN MAN*

1. *Introduction*

I am deeply grateful to Vice-Chancellor Dr. Abdul Ahmad Javid and the Kabul University for the kind invitation extended to me to visit this beautiful and ancient country of Afghanistan, and to spend a few days here as your guest, and to address you this evening on the very important theme, which you just now heard announced by Professor Elham in his speech introducing me: *Spiritual and Ethical Values*. This subject, when handled in the modern context, becomes transformed into *Psycho-social Evolution and Modern Man*.

The delight in coming to a university is, for me, the opportunity to meet thinking minds and to exchange thoughts with them, a process which is very needed today in the contemporary world of ours. Here we have the pre-eminent and only university in Afghanistan holding high the torch of learning in this part of the world. I have always felt that a university is a clearing house for all knowledge and, whenever a university functions from that point of view, with that openness and hospitality to the world of ideas, it becomes a great inspirer of culture and civilization.

In history, we have seen some of the greatest cultures arising, and radiating knowledge and the good life, as a result of opening themselves up to the best of contemporary knowledge. One of the most glorious examples of such an achievement was in the period from the 8th to the 12th centuries when the great empire of the Arabs became the centre of all the contemporary knowledge from Greece as well as from India. During that period, that empire became the greatest torch-bearer of culture, and the focal point of East and West, in the contemporary world. Today, our universities in all parts of the world have to become the clearing houses for the enormous fund of knowledge—scientific, socio-political, and spiritual—which the world has developed in the course of history, and help achieve the all-round good of mankind. And the subject we have chosen for this evening's discourse is particularly significant from this point of view.

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* Swami Ranganathananda visited Afghanistan at the invitation of the Government of Afghanistan, through the Kabul University, and the Government of India, through the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New-Delhi, from 19th to 29th March 1973. This is the edited text based on the tape record, of the extempore lecture delivered by the Swami at the Kabul University on 25th March 1973 on the above subject, followed by a stimulating half-an-hour question-answer session

2. *Technological Advance and the Decline of Values*

In the modern period, as compared to all previous eras, there has been an enormous increase in human knowledge, but side by side there has been a decline in values. Since the end of the Second World War, this situation has been receiving serious attention from eminent thinkers. A highly developed civilization, backed by an efficient science and technology, finds humanity wondering about the whole place of values in human life.

The most prominent contemporary social phenomenon is the breakdown of all ethical and moral codes based merely on an external authority, be it a sacred book, the fiat of an extra-cosmic God, a church, or even a political state, and modern man's incapacity to find a rational basis for his ethical and moral behaviour. Anti-authoritarianism, which has been a developing feature during the four centuries of the modern age, has now become its most prominent social characteristic. The vacuum thus created has resulted in as much distortion in the human personality and the social situation, though of a different kind, as that which resulted from that earlier authoritarian ethics. India's philosophy, the Vedānta, has always upheld that ethics, to be rational and universal, must seek and find its sanction *in human nature itself,* and not in any external reality or authority, sacerdotal or secular. India's depth-study and investigation of human nature had revealed to her great sages an infinite spiritual dimension, beyond the limited and separate organic and psychical dimensions, behind every human personality.

3. *Ethics versus the Nineteenth-Century Theory of Evolution*

In the nineteenth century, the physical science of biology had told us that 'struggle for existence and survival of the fittest' was the law of all evolution. This could not support or inspire man in his search for, or practice of, ethical or spiritual values. The nineteenth-century theory of evolution presented the objectives of evolution as organic satisfactions, organic survival, and numerical increase. This position was clarified by Thomas Huxley, collaborator of Darwin, who felt that human society could not go on without ethical and spiritual values, but that, at the same time, biology in its theory of evolution could find no support for these values. Biology teaches us, he said, about 'the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest', but ethics demands 'the fitting of as many as possible to survive.' This contradiction between biological theory and ethical demands could not be resolved in the nineteenth century, with the result that values became impossible to be upheld on the basis of mere physical science, whereas, throughout the ages, man has upheld values, ethical and spiritual, and the great religions have taught that human life bereft of these values has no meaning at all.

The vacuum thus created by the advance of the physical sciences in the modern age has caused a very difficult situation for humanity. There is an erosion of the traditional ethical and moral values, and no new set of values has been put in their place. Thus the more advanced a society is, the more does it experience this getting away from the demands of ethical and spiritual values. In the absence of the stimulus of higher values, there is increasing stress on organic satisfactions—satisfactions purely at the physical level—and there is an efficient technology which increasingly serves these purposes.

4. *The Post-War Disillusionment*

But after the Second World War, there has been a protest against this situation. Outstanding Western thinkers like the late Professor Sorokin of Harvard University and the late Prof. Bertrand Russell of England, have warned that modern civilization cannot survive unless it is inspired by ethical and spiritual values. Among these values, the most important, which they stressed, was love. Men must learn to love each other. There has been too much hatred and violence, which has been made more grim by the technological efficiency of modern man. And so, these great thinkers protested against the contemporary situation, of man invested with ever greater power, technological and intellectual, without morality to chasten it, without love to give it a higher human motivation and direction. But how is man to increase love in his heart? Can machines, and more machines, help to increase the content of values in human life, individually and collectively? To this question, Bertrand Russell gives an emphatic negative reply. In his post-war speeches, which come to us in a book entitled *The Impact of Science on Society,* this great philosopher discusses in one place this problem of values in our modern machine-dominated civilization. Here are his words (p.77):

> 'The machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism. ... Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

5. *Ethical Values in the Light of Twentieth-Century Biology*

Values are not mechanical; by adding machine to machine and by increasing the efficiency of our technology, we are not going to produce values in society, we are not going to generate love in the heart of man. These values are not mechanical. They are spiritual. Accordingly, we have to seek for them in the *heart of man* himself. There must be a deeper dimension in him which needs to be stirred in order to help him to express the ethical and spiritual values of love, compassion, dedication, and the spirit of service, all those positive virtues and graces that make for the beauty of human character and the integration of man with man within society. This pressing problem of the contemporary world, of the East and of the West, finds a promising avenue of approach from another stimulating **Western** source, namely, its twentieth-century biology. Whereas, in the nineteenth century, physical sciences generally, and the science of biology particularly, could not give any support for ethical and spiritual values, and ethics and organic evolution ran parallel courses, the twentieth-century physics has withdrawn its earlier support to materialism and twentieth-century biology has found ethics fundamental to its philosophy of evolution at the human stage.

This subject of ethical and spiritual values, therefore, needs to be discussed today in the new light coming from the revolutionary advances in biology during the last one hundred years. These advances help to bring this subject of values and the science of biology closer to the teachings of the great world religions. Today, for the first time, physical science and the science of religion speak almost identically on the subject of man, on the subject of his growth, development, and fulfilment. But, unfortunately, whatever advances are registered in the field of pure science take at least half a century to become current coin in society. This is the position now with respect to these wholesome advances in physical and biological sciences.

6. *Evolution: Its Pre-human Stage and its Human Stage*

About fourteen years ago, there was a great congress of scientists in the field of biology held at the University of Chicago, to celebrate the centenary of Darwin's publication of *The Origin of Species*. That was a great occasion which was utilized by the assembled scientists to assess the developments, revolutionary and far-reaching, in the science of biology since the time of the publication of that book by Darwin in the last century, and to study what impacts these new developments have on man, on his life and destiny. The proceedings of this conference were published by the Chicago University in three volumes entitled *Evolution After Darwin*. What impresses one in the panel discussions, and in the papers presented, at the above conference, is the new orientation given to the philosophy of evolution at the human stage, to its objectives and criteria, an orientation which brings the subject close to the spiritual teachings of the religions of the world.

What is the nature of that orientation? A clear demarcation is made by these developments between evolution at the pre-human stage and evolution at the human stage. This orientation stresses the uniqueness of man compared to all pre-human organisms. In the nineteenth century, evolution was presented by biology with a view to shattering that concept of human uniqueness long upheld by Christian theology which held that man was a special creation of God. Science cannot entertain that kind of special treatment to any species, and so biology set itself to breaking down that type of human uniqueness. But twentieth-century biology has brought back the concept of human uniqueness, but though in a new and rational formulation.

7. *The Uniqueness of Man*

Man is unique in more ways than one, says Sir Julian Huxley, who has also written a book bearing the title *The Uniqueness of Man*. That uniqueness arises from his developed cerebral system, his capacity for reasoning and speech communication. Man is unique through these new developments in him, through which evolution has become self-conscious in him for the first time. He has the capacity to understand and to direct the course of evolution. The importance of these new developments has compelled twentieth-century biology to reconsider the goals and criteria of evolution at the human stage, and recognize that they are quite different from what they were at the pre-human stage. The nineteenth century theory of evolution presented, for the pre-human stage, three goals, namely, organic satisfaction, organic survival, and numerical increase; and these were presented as equally applicable to man as well. But in the present century, these are accepted as relevant only for the pre-human phase of evolution. At the human phase, they become secondary and cease to be primary. And *fulfilment* is presented as the primary goal at the human stage.

Following from this new concept of fulfilment, twentieth-century biology also presents a new criterion of evolution at the human stage, namely, *quality* and *richness,* as opposed to *quantity* and *uniformity* of the pre-human phase. In the course of his speech at that Congress at Chicago, Sir Julian Huxley said that organic satisfaction, and material production thereto, are valid, but only up to a certain point. Material production is but a means to a further end. That further end is *fulfilment.* And fulfilment implies *qualitative* enrichment. Can we bring quality into human life? Quantity becomes secondary; but quality is primary. So he says(*Evolution After-Darwin* Vol. III, p. 259):

> 'Once we truly believe. ... that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or T.V. sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, and not an end in itself.'

8. *Psycho-Social Evolution*

We may remember that, in the last century, evolution was formulated, first, as organic evolution. This was extended to the pre-organic phase as cosmic evolution. And soon the concept of evolution became comprehensive and invaded every field of study With the emergence, from cosmic evolution, of organic evolution, with the appearance of the living cell, *a first breakthrough* occurred, and continued steadily onward through a process of internal organic complexity and organic integration, accompanied by an increase of the value of awareness and of the consequent grip of the organism on the external environment. This process has achieved a *second breakthrough*, with the emergence of man, says twentieth-century biology, consequently changing the pattern and direction of evolution in a fundamental way. What is the nature of that fundamental change in the pattern and direction of evolution at the human stage? The answer to that question is most revolutionary. Evolution at the human stage, says biology today, *is not organic evolution;* it is something else. And that something else is presented in a significant phrase: *It is psycho-social evolution.* When nature has endowed man with the remarkable organ, namely, the cerebral system, what other new organs does he need to evolve thereafter? With the help of his cerebral system, man can invent any organ he may need more efficiently and quickly than nature can give it to him through her long and wasteful evolutionary processes. Instead of wings on his body, he can invent, has invented, the powerful aeroplane. And so, if evolution has ceased to be mainly organic in man, what else has it become in him? It has risen to the level of *psycho-social evolution* in him, says twentieth-century biology.

If modern civilization can grasp the full significance of this term and concept of psycho-social evolution, and proceed energetically to implement it today, we shall witness a significant breakthrough out of the prevailing confusions and despairs of the contemporary human situation. It will then be *the third breakthrough,* most significant of all, in the long story of the evolutionary process.

Psycho-social evolution is evolution above the organic level. Man's intellect, sharpened by modern science and technology, has become a source of fear for him because it is conditioned by, and is in thraldom to, his organic system for the satisfactions of which he is prepared to exploit and destroy others. This alienation from others converts him into a focus of tension and non-fulfilment. Referring to this predicament of modern man, Bertrand Russell says (*Impact of Science on Society*, p. 123):

> 'We are in the middle of a race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends.'

So far as *means* are concerned, we have plenty of efficient knowledge with us, both theoretical and practical. But so far as *ends* are concerned, we are governed by folly. We are prone to use those means to exploit each other, destroy each other. There is a hidden fear that modern humanity, not guided by high ethical values and ideals, may utilize this efficient knowledge to destroy itself. This is a very real fear in the advanced countries of the world today. And, continuing the argument, Bertrand Russell concludes with the significant remark:

> 'Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.'

9. *Psycho-Social Evolution as Spiritual Growth*

This is the contemporary tragedy: knowledge has grown enormously, but wisdom has tarried. All this knowledge is in the service of the ego, the little self centred in, and in thraldom to, man's organic system. Can man grow beyond that ego? Can he transform his dismal knowledge into luminous and saving wisdom? To this gnawing question, biology gives a positive answer in its concept of psycho-social evolution, echoing the message of man's spiritual growth as expounded in India's ancient and perennial philosophy, the Vedānta.

Man need not remain a focus of tension and non-fulfilment; he can grow; he can evolve; he can achieve fulfilment. What is the nature of that growth, of that evolution? So far as science had been willing to admit, there had been only two types of human growth: one was *physical* growth, and the other was *intellectual or mental* growth. Are there only these two types, or is there a growth of man in a higher dimension, in a third dimension? It is this question that finds a positive and hopeful answer today in modern biology, on the one side, and in the spiritual insights of the great world religions, on the other. These tell us today that man must grow not only physically, not only intellectually, but also spiritually. He must rise above the limitations of his organic system, of his ego conditioned by that organic system—with the help of that organic system itself—and expand spiritually so as to experience his oneness with other human beings, with all other beings; he must learn to extend his affections to others and to have others extend theirs into him, by carrying his evolution from the organic to the psycho-social level. And this spiritual evolutionary advance, *this third breakthrough* which is the struggle for realization of the possibilities lying within that very second breakthrough of evolution, he should take into his own hands, for which mother nature has endowed him with the necessary organic equipments, and not leave it to nature to accomplish it for him through her long and wasteful processes.

This is a fascinating theme and provides a heroic adventure to the indomitable spirit of man, in the light of which his religious traditions yield much saving wisdom and inspiration and his energies of knowledge find their upward purpose and direction. It is through this spiritual growth that we can visualize the emergence of a new humanity, with the capacity to rise from knowledge to wisdom, from exploitation to service, from indifference and hatred to human concern and love.

10. *Vedānta as a Science of Human Possibilities*

There are tremendous possibilities hidden in everyone, says Vedānta, which also shows man the way to realize them. Sir Julian Huxley similarly says that what we need today is a new science, namely, a science of human possibilities, a science which calls for the study of *man in depth*. And it was such a study that the great sages of ancient India undertook and accomplished; and their insights, as much as the scientific methods and attitudes adopted by them, are available to all humanity in that immortal literature—rational and universal, ancient and yet modern—known as the Upaniṣads. They bear a close kinship with the modern scientific spirit and temper, and have evoked the appreciation and admiration of many modern scientists. Conveying such admiration in his letter of critical appreciation of the first edition of my book: *The Message of the*

Upaniṣads, Sir Julian Huxley says (*The Message of the Upaniṣads* Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, Bombay, Second Edition, 1971, p. 572):

> 'Please thank the Swami again for sending me his book—though, as you see, I am critical of certain points in it, it has given me new knowledge and understanding of various aspects of human nature.'

11. *Growth of Man from Individuality to Personality*

That depth-study of man by the Upaniṣads has revealed an infinite vista of human possibilities. It proclaims man as immortal and divine in his essential nature, and details the techniques for its manifestation by him, and defines religion accordingly, in the words of Swami Vivekananda, as 'the manifestation of the divinity already within man'. This finds echoes, in its early stages, in the concept of psycho-social evolution of modern biology. This is the insight that now should find a central place in modern man's philosophy of education, in his philosophy of human growth, development, and fulfilment. That philosophy, as obtaining at present, is based on a surface view of man and his possibilities. It views him entirely as an organically conditioned ego ever in search of organic satisfactions. It conceives of his education entirely in terms of the strengthening of his ego, of the strengthening of his individuality centred in that ego. And Vedānta points out that this is the main source of the prevailing tension and unfulfilment, individual and collective, in the modern world, and summons modern man to use his enormous knowledge and talents to carry his evolution beyond his organically conditioned and trivial ego into the expansive spiritual freedom of his true self. 'All expansion is life, and all contraction is death', says Swami Vivekananda. Stagnation at the ego level is death for man, because the ego is only

> 'One of nature's devices, a convenient provisional delusion of considerable strategic value',

as remarked by the authors of *The Science of Life*—that voluminous digest of modern biological knowledge by H. G. Wells, G. P. Wells, and Julian Huxley.

A baby, before its birth, has no individuality; it is part of its mother's body. But as soon as it is born, it becomes an identifiable individual. And the first education of the new-born child is the strengthening of its ego, of the individuality centred in its ego. But this first education must be followed by a significant second education, which will make it respond to, and welcome, other babies in its environment. And in achieving this second capacity, it transcends, grows beyond, its organically limited ego, side by side with its steady growth in its more obvious physical and intellectual dimensions. Without that spiritual growth, with its by-products of the ethical values such as love and concern for others, the child's growth in the other two dimensions of his body and intellect is bound to be a source of non-fulfilment, as much for himself as for others. But by growing in that third dimension—from his 'unripe ego' into the 'ripe ego', in the words of Sri Ramakrishna—he grows from *individuality* to *personality*. This is the first fruit of his spiritual growth, of his psycho-social evolution, which enables him to enter into, and be entered into by, other persons. If this growth does not take place, man becomes incapable of *communicating* with other human beings. And this incapacity is a prominent and growing trait in modern man—between husbands and wives, parents and children, and in other areas of society. It was expressed to me by an American girl student in a precise remark about the limitation of modern education: 'It does not help me to *communicate* with other people.' This problem was defined by Bertrand Russell when he said that a mere strengthening of his ego, centred in his organic individuality, converts man into a billiard ball, and that the only relationship between one such billiard ball and another is *collision*. A billiard ball cannot enter *into* another billiard ball. But we want our children 'to enter into' other children. If so, then, by all means, help the child to grow beyond individuality to personality. Give him the capacity to acquire that large humanness. That is the technique and fruit of psycho-social evolution. Put every child on the way of his spiritual growth, along with his physical and intellectual growth. Then alone will he become a *person* and not remain a mere *individual*. What is a person? What is personality? And what is the difference between an individual and a person? Here is a fine definition by Sir Julian Huxley given in his Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man:*

> 'Persons are individuals who transcend their merely organic individuality in conscious (social) participation.'

When one consciously *participates* in the life of other individuals, one ceases to be a mere organically limited individual, a mere 'unripe' ego, and becomes a spiritually expansive *person*. This is *personality,* which suggests a growth, an expansion, an evolution beyond the organic level. A child must start as an individual, as an ego, but should not stop there. He should soon be led on the road of his spiritual growth into a personality, to become a person among persons. Creativity and spontaneity come to man at that level only.

Through psycho-social evolution, the psyche in man, by the disciplined and creative use of his cerebral and emotional systems, becomes liberated from its tether to the little ego centred in his organic system, and grows and expands, so as to experience its basic spiritual unity with increasing numbers of psyches in the social environment. Every step on this road of spiritual expansion is a liberating experience, says Vedānta, and bestows on man a sense of fearlessness, in the words of the *Gītā (II.40): Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt.*

'Even a little of this *dharma* saves man from great fear.'

12. *Physical Science Versus The Science of Religion*

This is a new idea in all physical science, even in the almost non-physical borderland-physical-science of biology. But it has always been there as the central idea in the science of religion. Today, there is a possibility of bringing together these two streams of knowledge, these two vital human disciplines, to provide a philosophy of an integrated human development for the fullest flowering of man's possibilities. Science physical and science human, coming together and combining their resources and leading man to total fulfilment, individual and collective—that is the promising and much-needed prospect before us. This will constitute the most effective challenge to human wisdom, to face and overcome the formidable problems thrown up by the amazing but disconcerting modern scientific, technological, and social developments.

This is why this subject of psycho-social evolution and ethical and spiritual values needs to be treated as fundamental to all education, and needs to be viewed in the light of the highest human insights in the realms of the physical sciences and that of spirituality.

At the end of the last century, modern man treated religion as merely a relic of his superstitious primitive past. But since the end of the Second World War, many great scientists have begun to feel and to express the conviction that the spiritual core of the higher religions, as different from their creedal and institutional forms, is needed very badly today to lead man to total fulfilment, and that the physical sciences by themselves are incapable of achieving this. One such scientist, the astrophysicist R.A. Millikan, in a testament at the close of his *Autobiography,* says:

> 'It seems to me that the two great pillars upon which all human well-being and human progress rest are, first, the spirit of religion and, second, the spirit of science or knowledge. Neither can attain its largest effectiveness without support from the other. To promote the latter, we have universities and research institutions. *But the supreme opportunity for everyone, with no exception, lies in the first.*' (italics not by the author)

13. *Psycho-Social Evolution and Modern Man*

Creedal religion by itself cannot lead man to total fulfilment; physical science by itself cannot similarly lead man to total fulfilment. They both need to be integrated in a comprehensive philosophy of human growth, development, and fulfilment. This is the work that the Vedanta attempted and achieved in so early a period of human history, and which Swami Vivekananda expounded in East and West in the modern age with much rational appeal and spiritual conviction.

Man, in the modern technologically advanced civilization, is well-equipped, thinks Vedānta, to advance evolution to this psycho-social level. If he will not do so, his psychic energies will stagnate at the organic level and kick back on himself with increasing virulence—a tragedy which is increasingly being enacted already all over the world. And if modern man decides to choose the path of his psycho-social evolution, he will need to take the help of the science and technique of man's inner life, which is the meaning and scope of religion, according to Vedanta.

14. *Conclusion*

The message of religion *as spiritual growth,* and the message of evolution, in modern biology, *as psycho-social evolution,* is what the philosophy of Vedanta sees as the manifestation of the infinite divine possibilities lying within man. Vedānta views all ethical, aesthetic, and spiritual values as the by-products of such growth, of such manifestation. This philosophy breathes the spirit of true *religion,* in its approach to human development from the within, through the manipulation of the inner *milieu,* and the spirit which underlies all true *politics,* in its approach to man's development from the without, through the manipulation, by positivistic methods, of the socio political conditions of his external life.

This philosophy finds expression in a brief testament of Swami Vivekananda *(The Complete Works,* Vol. I (1962), p. 257):

> 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one or more or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms are but secondary details.'

11

MODERN EDUCATION AND OUR UPANISADS*

1. *Introduction*

I am very thankful to the University Women Teachers Association, Coimbatore, for inviting me to address you this evening. On my way to this meeting, I came to know from Professor Saraswati and Dr. Rajammal Devadas that this Association was devoted to culture and intellect and that it did not take part in active politics. I am happy to know that there is at least one such educational association free from the prevalent power-politics of our educational institutions, and devoted to the primary task of promoting the academic atmosphere by striving to keep the light of intellect and culture bright and pure. When Dr. Rajammal and Professor Saraswati told me a while ago that the audience that would be listening to me here would be enlightened men and women, I was extremely delighted, for I like the words *enlightened* and *enlightenment,* and consider them as the very soul of education.

2. *Education as Training of the Mind and not Stuffing of the Brain*

The first aim and function of university education, nay, of all education, should be to bring enlightenment to the students. Stuffing the student's mind with facts and formulae is not education, because it does not bring enlightenment nor confer energy. *Training the mind,* and *not stuffing the brain,* is what we need. Thus alone will the student be able to acquire a luminous mind and increased energy of personality. This is what our ancient Upanisads proclaim as the objective of education. This is conveyed to us in one of the famous verses known as *Śānti pāṭha* or 'Peace chant' occurring in the *Kaṭha* and some other Upaniṣads. I have discussed this Upaniṣadic aim of education in my exposition of this verse, and other similar verses, of the *Kaṭha* and some other Upaniṣads, in my book: *The Message of the Upaniṣads.* Referring to this exposition, the British biologist Sir Julian Huxley, in his correspondence with me through a British friend, in 1970, says, after his study of the first edition of my above book (*ibid.*, Second Edition, pp.571-73):

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*Speech at the public meeting, organized by the University Women Teachers Association, Combatore, and held in the auditorium of the Avinashilingam Home Science College, Coimbatore-10, on 22nd February 1973

> 'I have now read Swami Ranganathananda's book with interest—I agree that the Upanisads are remarkable achievements considering the date of their composition. ...
>
> 'I assure him that I am much impressed with his general exposition of the Upaniṣads and the way in which they anticipate many psychological discoveries of our own time. ...
>
> 'Though, as you see, I am critical of certain points in it, it has given me new knowledge and understanding of various aspects of human nature. ...
>
> 'On page 263(of *The Message),* the Swami gives a splendid definition of what education ought to be, and sometimes is. But my visits to India showed me that the aim of a large number of Indian undergraduates was not to enjoy an education of this sort, but to pass examinations and obtain a degree, which is useful in getting jobs.'

In my reply, I said, among other things (*ibid.*, pp. 608-609):

> 'This is unfortunately too true. ... Current Indian education is basically a continuation of what the British introduced in India in the last century with its aim of turning out clerks. It has quantitatively expanded immensely since the British left, but has gone down qualitatively. It has neither the virtues of the ancient Indian system nor of the modern British system, but has the weaknesses of both. It turns out, every year, not men, but functionaries of society—so many lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc. etc. *But India is also silently engaged in significant experiments in education, and there is much silent constructive thinking and discussion also on the subject.* We may hope to feel the impact of all these on our education in the coming decades. The fact is, everything in India today is in a melting pot–education, politics, religion, society, etc. She is passing through the most revolutionary transition in her long history. Her modern thinkers and leaders, especially Vivekananda, had the fullest grasp of the scope and possibilities of this transition. None can predict the shape of things to come. But her great leaders have injected great ideas into the body-politic; and there is the atmosphere of freedom; and there is youthful energy and dynamism. *The combination of these factors has turned modern India into a vast anthropological laboratory covering a sixth of the human race.* And we can take comfort from what Vivekananda said: 'Put the chemicals together, crystallization will take place according to nature's laws".'

3. *Educational Significance of the Sānti Pāṭha of the Upaniṣads*

The peace chant referred to above is as follows:

Om. Sahanavavatu; saha nau bhunaktu;
saha vīryaṁ karavāvahai;
Tejaswinavadhītamastu;
ma vidviṣavahai. Om śāntiḥ, santiḥ, śāntiḥ, —

'Om. May Brahman (the one divine Self in all) protect us both (student and teacher); may Brahman nourish us both; may we both acquire energy (by this education): may we both become illumined (as a result of this education); may we not hate each other. Om. Peace, Peace, Peace.'

Commenting on this, I have said (*ibid., p. 263):*

> 'This peace invocation contains many beautiful sentiments, sentiments which have inspired Indian education—secular and religious—for a few thousand years. Teacher and student engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and excellence of character is education. ... The invocation expresses the idea of education as the achievement of knowledge and excellence of character in the *context* of a harmonious relationship between teacher and student; they are *en rapport.* The giving and receiving of knowledge, leading to the making of man, depends on the stimulus of such teacher-student relationship. The teacher gives and the student receives, not only ideas and information, but inspiration as well. In all the true education, teacher and student are not mere individuals, but personalities. Education, according to the Indian sages, is the lighting of one lamp from another lamp.'

4. *The Range and Quality of Human Energy Resources*

'May we acquire energy', says the verse. Every step in education helps man to reach out to newer and newer energy resources within him. All energy is within man, says Vedānta. But they lie in deeper and deeper layers, *in an ascending order of subtlety, immensity, and inwardness,* in the words of Śaṅkarācārya in his comment on verses ten and eleven of chapter three of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad.* The more inner the layer, the more *sūkṣma,* i.e. subtle, and the more *mahānta,* i.e immense, and the more capable it becomes of being referred to as *pratyagātma-bhūta,* the true Self, the inner Self of man. The physcial body of man is gross. It contains some energy—muscular energy—and is more subtle than matter in outer nature, and can be treated by man as his self with respect to that outer world of matter, of the not-self. But more subtle, immense in range and quantity, and more truly capable of being treated as man's self, is the nervous and psychical energy systems in him. A tiny nerve fibre behind a large muscle is the source of the energy of that muscle. The intangible mind, on the other hand, is the source of the energy of the entire nervous system; it is subtler, more immense, and more inward than the muscular and nervous systems of man, both of which become weak and powerless, even though healthy and fit in every other sense, when the mind behind them fails, as happens in psychic breakdowns. And behind the mind, energizing it and, through it, the nerves and the muscles, the Upaniṣads discovered the Ātman or the Puruṣa, the true Self of man, the one Self in all men and all nature, the unity of the impersonal and the personal. And so the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* proclaimed in that verse eleven: *Puruṣāt na paraṁ kincit, sā kāṣṭhā, sā parā gatih*—'There is nothing higher than the Puruṣa; that *is* the finale, that *is* the supreme goal.' To quote its exposition in *The Message of the Upanisads* (p. 429):

> 'Man—his growth, development, and realization—is the perennial theme of Vedānta. Exploring the "within" of the universe through the human personality, the Vedāntic sages discovered the Puruṣa or Brahman—the immortal behind the mortal, the infinite behind the finite. In verses ten and eleven, which we have been studying today, we have listened to Yama expounding to Naciketā the various layers or sheaths which cover Brahman, the penetration of which constitutes not only man's spiritual journey, but also his intellectual journey. While reading the exposition, the spiritual student experiences, even at this distance of time from Yama and Naciketa, a stirring of the deeper levels of his own personality. When a great teacher utters a profound truth even in whispers, it will reverberate through the corridors of space and time. It was said of Vivekananda in our own time by a great thinker that, even when Vivekanandas speak to themselves, they address the whole of humanity. The truths that the Upanisads proclaimed ages ago are of contemporary interest in every age, because they are the fruits of detached and rational, sustained and sincere, pursuit of truth, and they are addressed to man as such, and not to any group or section thereof, and have a profound bearing on his growth, development, and fulfilment.'

Ātmanā vindaté vīryam—'By the knowledge of the Ātman, man gets infinite energy', says the *Kena Upanisad* (II. 4). Education helps man to secure access to the greater and greater energy resources within him. An uneducated rustic youth, timid and helpless, changes, through a few years in school, into a youth with a measure of fearlessness and self-confidence. Knowledge destroys fear, is a verified statement in human life. His education, continued further, helps that youth to develop a sense of his own individual identity. No more does he feel as a man submerged in the collectivity. No more is he confined to the apprehending of the world around him solely through what psychology calls 'the primary mode of cognition', characteristic of childhood and the dream state, but rises to the first stages of 'the secondary mode of cognition', characteristic of a mature mind. It is this *rising to the status of individuality from* *the state of the pre-individual mass man* that gives man the capacity to take independent decisions, the courage to stand by them and take the consequences, and the ability to deal with the world, and his position in it, as a mature human being. This is what Swami Vivekananda calls *man-making education*. This first stage of his education thus helps man to achieve mental maturity side by side with his attaining, automatically like any other physical organism, physical maturity. *This psychic maturity is one of the important criteria of education;* and it comes only from an education *that trains the mind* and *not merely stuffs the brain*.

5. *The Problem of Mental Immaturity in Many of Our People*

It is here that the failure of our education is writ large. It does not impart that psychological maturity to many; only some achieve it by their own efforts or from the happy environment of their lives. *The presence of millions of mentally immature people among our illiterates is national tragedy indeed. But what is more tragic is to find millions of them even among our literates, nay, even among our so-called educated!* Swami Vivekananda referred to all such, in his famous lecture on *My Plan of Campaign* delivered in Madras in 1867, as *moustached babies!* They are physically very mature, but mentally they are like babies—dependent, weak, demanding, and bereft of the sense of personal dignity and responsibility—traits, not at all ugly, even often charming, in all physical babies, but too tragic in all physically grown up men and women. All our social evils such as demanding dowries in marriage, cling around such people, as sons, fathers, and mothers in society. They have not developed that human energy resource that can identify human problems and rise above them themselves and take their society also with them.

Behind these immature traits in all such people lies the lack of that luminosity or enlightenment which the Upaniṣads present as the second fruit of all true education, as mentioned in the peace chant: *tejasvinau adhītam astu*— 'may we be enlighened by this study, by this education'. This is the significance of knowledge being compared to light; we speak of *Jñāna-dīpa*, *Jnānāloka*, the light of *Jñāna* or knowledge. The Upaniṣads describe the Ātman, the Self, as *Jñāna-svarūpa or cit-svarūpa*, of the very nature of knowledge, of the very nature of consciousness. All awakening to knowledge, to consciousness, is, therefore, the manifestation of the Ātman, in varying degrees. The one clarion call of the Upaniṣads, therefore, is: Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached, according to the free rendering given by Vivekananda to the verse 14 of chapter 3 of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad: Uttiṣṭhaṭa, jāgrata, prāpya varān nibodhata.*

6. *Individuality versus Personality*

Social evolution beyond the tribal and the feudal stages begins with the emergence of a society of independent individuals out of men and women submerged, till then, in the collectivity, in the mass. This, as I have said earlier, is the first stage of man's education; this first stage must be followed by the next important stage, namely, *the growth of individuality into personality*. The emergence of strong individuals out of that first stage of education creates also new problems for man and his society. The most serious of these problems is increase of inter-human tensions, with increasing violence in society and increasing incapacity to *communicate* with other individuals as its accompaniment, intensified, in its later stages, by increasing tensions and frustrations within the individuals concerned. This is the standing problem of all societies achieving large-scale industrial development from a pre-industrial rural stage.

This is the very despair of modern man, the standing problem of modern civilization, and an ever-staring interrogation mark before all modern Western philosophies of man. And it is precisely here that the Upaniṣads provide a light to take modern man out of his encircling gloom. It is precisely here that the name *sanātana dharma*, perennial philosophy, by which the philosophy and religion of the Upaniṣads is known since ages, becomes significant. Hence the exhortation in the peace chant: *mā vidviṣāvahai*– 'let us not hate each other', immediately after the other two sentiments: *Saha vīryaṁ karavāvahai*—'let us acquire energy (as a result of our education)'and *tejasvinau adhītam astu*—'let us be illumined (as a result of our education)'.

The illumination that establishes man on the pedestal of his individual dignity, and the energy that comes out of that individuality, undoubtedly constitute human growth, human evolution. But Vedānta says that this must be treated not as the final stage of human growth, but only as the first stage, the first steps, of his growth or evolution. These first steps must soon be followed by the more important and more fascinating subsequent steps, *the first of which is, as referred to earlier, the evolution or growth of individuality to personality,* the 'unripe ego' evolving into the 'ripe ego', in the luminous words of Sri Ramakrishna. Individuality, as I said earlier, is the seat of tension; it derives its strength from the tiny ego centred in man's organic system. It is like a billiard ball, in the words of the late Bertrand Russell, whose only relationship with other similar billiard balls is— collision. Dominance, exploitation, aggression— these remain the predominant characteristics of man at this individuality stage of development. Man, therefore, should not remain at that stage too long; for he has to learn to negotiate with the society of other human beings around him if he is to achieve life-fulfilment; he has to learn to enter into them emotionally, and allow himself to be entered into by them. This is the art of human *communication,* the capacity to love and to serve and to evoke love and service from others.

Man can never achieve these very needed virtues and graces without growing beyond that individuality stage, beyond that 'unripe' state of his ego. *These virtues and graces are the product of a real human growth*—but a growth, not physical, nor intellectual, but spiritual; it is the growth or evolution of a *personality* out of that strong *individuality,* the product of which is a man, warm and rich in heart, and endowed with the awareness of ample inner energy resources. Persons can be defined as individuals who transcend their mere organic individuality in *conscious* social *participation.* The capacity for love and service proceeding from personality, from this conscious *participation* in the life of other human beings in the social environment, from this expansion and spiritual growth beyond individuality, from the achievement of an awareness, however dimly it be in its early stages, of one's spiritual identity with other human beings, yields, in increasing measure, the precious values of ethical sense and human concern and aesthetic sensitiveness, which tend to reduce, in corresponding measure, exploitations, violence, and tensions in human society.

7. *Psycho-Social Evolution as Spiritual Growth*

This spiritual growth into personality is what twentieth-century biology calls the *psycho-social evolution* of man. *It is man rising above organic evolution, which is relevant to the pre-human phase, to the spiritual and cultural levels, relevant to the human phase, on the basis and on the strength of that organic phase itself.* Organic evolution is not so relevant in the case of man whom nature has fitted with the most versatile organ, namely, his cerebral system, which can help him, if properly cared for, nourished, and used, not only to invent any organs which he may stand in need of, but also to go beyond his organic limitations and experience spiritual freedom, an experience denied to all other species in nature.

Modern technological developments provide the necessary conditions, externally, for this carrying of evolution to its fascinating psycho-social stage. This can come about only when modern man realizes that the most urgent and constant emphasis hereafter should be *more on the growth within man,* and *less on the growth without him.* With the knowledge of human growth, development, and fulfilment, available to us in the Vedāntic study of the science of man in depth in its *adhyātma-vidyā* or the science of the Atman, and the enormous technical means available to us through the modern scientific revolution, the development of a mankind-awareness and stable international peace and order need not remain a mere utopia, as in past ages. And if modern humanity refuses to take advantage of these facilities of knowledge and technique, spiritual and scientific, and move forward on this road of his psycho-social evolution, of his spiritual growth from individuality to personality, he need look forward only to a dismal future, with more and more violence and tensions, sorrows and unfulfilment in store for him, along with his plunging into more and more sensuality and vulgarity.

The preamble to the Unesco proclaims a well-known truth:

> 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.'

That is the special objective and function of education as conceived by the Upaniṣads which hold that only by helping people to achieve peace within themselves can they be helped to achieve outside of themselves. In the words of the late Dr. Joshiah Oldfield of London, in a speech given on the eve of the Second World War:

> 'More wars are caused by bad-tempered people seeking to discuss peace propositions than by good-tempered people seeking to discuss war measures!'

8. *'Om Śāntiḥ, Śāntiḥ, Śāntiḥ'*

Herein lies the importance and significance of the last line of the peace chant: *mā vidviṣāvahai. Om Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ Śāntiḥ*—'let us not hate each other'. Hate is the product of a sense of human seperateness and is a fellow-traveller with fear, tension, exploitation, and violence. All these disappear when the 'unripe' ego of individuality grows into the 'ripe' ego of personality. It is then that peace sets in, in the heart of man and he radiates that peace around him. This is not something unattainable, far away, something to be the concern of ascetics and saints only. It needs to be attained by every citizen; and it *can be* attained by all with a little effort, if backed by an appreciation of its importance and relevance.

In the sphere of marriage, which is the most intimate field of human relationship, a measure of this attainment by husband and wife imparts a wealth and intrinsic richness to the family which no external material wealth can give, and which no diminution of that external material wealth can mar. It is the atmosphere and strength created by this spiritual wealth in the family that converts the family into the nursery of the nation's morals and the most important school of man's spiritual growth and psycho-social evolution. And without that spiritual wealth generated within the family, the family, nay, the very texture of man-woman relationship in marriage, becomes distorted, imperilled, and rendered irrelevant. This is a very serious challenge before modern society; and this modern challenge can be met, and creatively responded to, only by the challenge of the ancient wisdom of the Upaniṣads which, among the entire range of the literary heritage of mankind, remain even today the greatest document of human freedom, unity, dignity, and glory.

9. *From Creatureliness to Blessedness*

The animal identifies itself fully with its body. It cannot, therefore, control or discipline its sense appetites. But with man begins the process of disengaging the self from this wrong identification, with the lighting up of his life-horizon of experience by the new, initially hazy, dimension of self-awareness, *ātma-jñāna,* an experience which, in the animal, is confined to the world of the not-self and the sense-organs. *Jñānamasti samastasya jantor viṣaya gocaré*—'knowledge, in the case of all *jantus,* i.e., creatures entirely dependent on external nature, is confined to what comes through the portals of the sense-organs', says the *Devī Māhātmya* or *Caṇḍi.* But, to the human consciousness, the body—in fact, the entire psycho-physical organism—slowly reveals itself only as the instrument of the self, and not as the self, the finest instrument that mother nature has devised, in her vast evolutionary laboratory, to help the organism concerned to manifest the true Self: *Brahmāvaloka-dhiṣaṇam*—'capable of realizing Brahman, the infinite Self of all', as the *Śrimad Bhāgvatam* proclaims in one of its majestic verses (XI, 60. 28). This registers the evolution of man from creatureliness to blessedness.

But in the early stages of man's development, this distinction between the self and its instrument is not very clear, because of the pressure on man of his animal legacy, because of the influence on him, to use a biological expression, of the 'primeval slime of his early evolutionary origins'. But he soon begins gradually to overcome the drag of this legacy by initiating his psycho-social evolution, by entering, and marching onward, slowly but steadily, on the long road of his spiritual growth, of which the first two landmarks are individuality and personality, through which, and through which alone, does he achieve true humanness. This is true scientific humanism, unlike the current inadequate scientific humanism—indequate, because of the absence, behind it, *of the depth-data* regarding man which the Upaniṣads, *and the Upaniṣads alone,* have unravelled. Says Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on the *The Átman* delivered in England (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol.II, Ninth Edition, p.250):

> 'No books, no scriptures, no science, can ever imagine the glory of the Self that appears as man, the most glorious God that ever was, the only God that ever existed, exists, or ever will exist.'

10. *Enlightened Reason as the Charioteer of Human life.*

You are all distinguished products of modern higher education who have been able to supplement its obvious deficiencies by contact with the higher spiritual knowledge, the *parā vidyā,* as the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* terms it, available in our country. It is vital that we in our country today, and people in all other countries too, know the distinction and inter-relatedness between what the Upaniṣads-call *aparā vidyā,* lower knowledge, i.e., knowledge that sustains man at the stage of his individuality, at the stage of the 'unripe' ego centred in, and in thraldom to, his organic system, and *parā vidyā,* higher knowledge, knowledge that relates to that long, fascinating, and unique march of man on the road of his psycho-social evolution, of his spiritual growth, from limited individuality to expansive and rich personality. Concluding his exposition of the twin life-journey of man, namely, the secular and the spiritual, the latter in the very context of the former, through the illustration of the chariot imagery given in the third chapter of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* Yama, the teacher, says to Naciketā the student:

> *Vijñāna sārathiryastu manaḥpragrahavān narah;*
> *So'dhvanaḥ pāramāpnoti tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam*—

'He who has *Vijṇāna,* i.e. *buddhi* or enlightened intelligence, for his charioteer and (a disciplined) *manas,* i.e. mind, for his reins—he verily attains to the end of his life-journey, which is the *paramaṁ padam,* i.e. supreme state, of *Viṣṇu,* the all-pervading universal Lord.'

Here is a testament of education for complete human fulfilment, of education as 'learning to be' as much as 'learning to do', life-long education and not that which ends up as mere schooling, of education designed to manifest the fullest possibilities that lie within man. It is an education that makes man great *intrinsically,* and not in virtue of the temporary chair of authority on which he sits. It synthesizes secular education and spiritual education, *aparā vidyā* and *parā vidyā;* in a comprehensive philosophy of education, in a comprehensive philosophy of man's growth, development, and fulfilment. All our education today, both institutional, and non-institutional, needs to be inspired and energized by the following exhortation of Swami Vivekananda, which bears the energy and vision of this comprehensive philosophy *(The Complete Works,* Vol.III, Fourth Edition, p.193):

> 'Teach yourselves, teach everyone, his real nature; call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come, when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity'.

It is in the light of this comprehensive philosophy that Vivekananda said that the old religions said that he or she was an athiest who did not believe in God, but that the new religion teaches that he or she is an athiest who does not believe in himself or herself. It summons all men and women to capture faith in oneself, *ātmāśraddhā,* and, through that, capture faith in God and in other men and women.

11. *Conclusion*

With the intellectual and spiritual strength that will come, from a study and of the Upaniṣads, to increasing numbers of our people, especially our women, in the coming decades, we can expect, hope for, work for, and finally achieve, the much-needed transformation of our education and, through it, of our ancient society as well, in the light of that comprehensive philosophy of integrated human development. To work towards this consummation is the responsibility and privilege of all our citizens generally and of the members of educational associations such as yours particularly. Please accept my thanks and good wishes.

12

EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE LIGHT OF VEDANTA*

1. *Introduction*

I am thankful to the University of Burdwan for inviting me to address this Convocation and to share with all of you the joy of this occasion. I convey my love and greetings to the students who have received their degrees, diplomas, and medals today; I wish them all success in the next chapter of their life's struggles to earn an honest and decent living and discharge their citizenship responsibilities to their motherland.

This university is one of the hundred or so centres of what is called 'higher education' in our country. These are termed higher in relation to the institutions of secondary education called high schools. As the whole concept of the nature and role of this high and higher education is facing serious challenges from the contemporary human situation in all parts of the world, as much as in our own country, it is but relevant that our people, especially our students and teachers, subject it to a critical and searching scrutiny; and I propose to do this, briefly, in this Convocation Address, in the light of what I have gathered out of the finest heritage of the East and the West, namely, spirituality and science.

2. *Unesco Education Report: 'Learning to Be'*

Already, the Unesco has done useful work in this field through its International Commission for the Development of Education under the Chairmanship of M. Edgar Faure, former Prime Minister and Education Minister of France. That Commission has issued a preliminary report under the significant title: *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow*. In the letter dated 18 May 1972 addressed to the Director-General of the

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* Convocation Address at the Burdwan University, Burdwan, West Bengal, on 20 February, 1976

Unesco, while presenting the Report, the Chairman writes (*Learning to Be*, pp. V-VI):

> 'Four basic assumptions underlay our work from the start. The first, which was indeed the justification for the task we undertook, is that of the existence of an international community which, amidst the variety of nations and cultures, of political options and degrees of development, is reflected in common aspirations, problems, and trends, and in its movement towards one and the same destiny. The corollary to this is the fundamental solidarity of governments and peoples, despite transitory differences and conflicts.
>
> 'The second is belief in democracy, conceived of as implying each man's right to realize his own potential and to share in the building of his own future. The keystone of democracy, so conceived, is education—not only education that is accessible to all, but education whose aims and methods have been thought out afresh.
>
> 'The third assumption is that the aim of development is the complete development of man, in all the richness of his personality, the complexity of his forms of expression and his various commitments—as individual. member of a family and of a community, citizen and producer, inventor of techniques, and creative dreamer.
>
> 'Our last assumption is that only an over-all, life-long, education can produce the kind of complete man the need for whom is increasing, with the continually more stringent constraints tearing the individual asunder. We should no longer assiduously acquire knowledge once and for all, but learn how to build up a continually evolving body of knowledge all through life—"learn to be".'

3. *Learning to Be: An Indian Evaluation*

A brief review of the Report, from the Indian point of view, will be instructive in this context. I deal with it here on the lines of my communication on the Report submitted to the Indian National Unesco Commission in April 1973.

The authors of the Report have assessed the world's educational problems in a thorough manner. It must be pointed out, however, that they have not given sufficient attention to, and a deep probe into, the 'Goals' of education and into the developing of modern 'Scientific Humanism' into a more comprehensive scientific frame for all aspects of human life, by incorporating into it the rational insights, arising from a depth-study of human nature, which ancient India's Upaniṣads, to name only one of such sources, have bequeathed to all humanity. The Upaniṣads 'have given me much new knowledge of human nature', says the late Sir Julian Huxley, British biologist, in his letter conveying his critical appreciation of the first edition of my book: *The Message of the Upaniṣads.*

The authors' treatment of the important subjects of educational 'Goals' and 'Scientific Humanism' does not take into account the nature and technique of that dimension of human growth which makes the human ego expand, from its subjection to organic limitations, into the freedom of the unlimited dimension of his true self, from man's *individuality* centred in his ego into his *personality* centred in his true self. Individuality centred in the ego is compared by the late Bertrand Russell to a billiard ball, which can have only one relation to other billiard balls, namely, collision. But man as personality can enter into each other, *communicate* with each other, dig affections in each other. As defined by Sir Julian Huxley, and quoted by me in *The Message of Upaniṣads* (p. 420):

> 'Persons are individuals who transcend their merely organic individuality in conscious participation.'

This evolution of the *individual* into the *person* is what Vedānta calls *the spiritual growth of man* and what twentieth-century biology calls *the psycho-social evolution of man.* This subject constitutes the science of man in depth, the science of the true self of man, what the Upaniṣads call *Adhyātma-vidyā* and what Julian Huxley desired modern Western thought to develop into, namely '*a Science of Human Possibilities*'. This is the science and technique which enables man to direct his evolution from the organic to the specifically human psycho-social dimension. The physical sciences can never, by themselves, achieve this evolution for man; but they can provide him with the necessary conditions for it. 'Science can denature plutonium, but it cannot denature evil in the heart of man', says Einstein. To this can be added the assessment made by several scientists, especially in the post-Second World War period, that physical sciences can only create *conditions* for man's happiness, but cannot ensure that *he is happy*.

The statement on page 154 of *Learning to Be* that 'never until now has he (man) stretched to such limits his attempts to elucidate the mystery of the inner world', I am sorry to point out, totally ignores and overlooks the vital contributions to human knowledge in this great field made by the sages of the Upaniṣads from their scientific and penetrating investigations into the profound mystery of the inner nature of man, compared with which modern Western contributions are mere *scratches on the surface,* as remarked by Sir Julian Huxley.

The stress of the authors on page 148 on *'the need for self-control, scientific and ethical training',* and their statement on page 153 that 'in educational activities, anything designed to help man live at peace with himself, anything which draws him out of unhappy isolation and loneliness, also helps towards harmony among the peoples', and on page 154 that 'his knowledge of his own powers spreads to knowledge of his own consciousness', and their emphasis on page 157 that 'the truer he is to himself, the more closely he follows the laws of his nature and his own calling, the nearer he comes to humanity's common calling and, in addition, the better able he is to communicate with other people', are all admirable sentiments and statements which, however, *cannot be derived from, and sustained by, any of the data on human nature furnished by the current physical sciences or Scientific Humanism.* But all these desirable developments in man can be derived from, and sustained fully by, the depth-data furnished by the Vedāntic study of man. These developments are the *by-products* of what Vedānta calls *the spiritual growth of man,* over and above his physical and mental growths, and what twentieth-century biology calls the evolution of man rising from the *organic* to the *psycho-social* levels.

It is precisely because man, in the modern age, has no knowledge of the profound mystery of his inner nature, and has failed to raise, has not been taught to raise, his psychic energies, enormously augmented by the modern developments, from the organic to the psycho-social level of evolution, in spite of his being in the best of circumstances to do so in view of his mastery, through his physical sciences and technology, of his external environment, and has, consequently, become stagnant at his organic level, that he plays the contemporary tragic role of inner poverty and weakness in the context of external affluence and power, of a lonely individual in an environing crowd, of increasing boredom and uncreativeness within, in the context of mechanical efficiency, inventiveness, and excitements without.

The remedy for this individual and social distortion obviously lies in the continuation of man's evolution beyond the organic level, or the continuation of his growth, beyond the physical and the mental, into the spiritual level. There is a science and technique of this spiritual growth, of this higher evolution. *And this forms, or ought to form, according to Vedānta, the central core of any meaningful education in the case of a being so high in the scale of evolution as man.*

It is only then that the very meaningful concepts of *Life-long Education,* of *Education for a Complete Man,* of *Education to Be* and not merely *Education to Do,* will become fruitful. Otherwise, these very beautiful and significant concepts, which find powerful endorsement in the following utterance of Sri Ramakrishna: *As long as I live, so long do I learn,* may become reduced, in spite of the sincere protestations of the authors of *Learning to Be,* to the mere acquisition of newer and newer information and talents throughout life. This *Learning to Be* will shine better in the light of the depth study of man given in Vedānta.

4. *Education as 'Learning to Do' and 'Learning to Be'*

Learning to Be and *Learning to Do* have to become two *inseparable* aspects of any education designed to help the human child to achieve life fulfilment. Modern education all over the world has so far concentrated only on the *Learning to Do* aspect. The high efficiency achieved by modern Western man, and the Japanese, in this field is the product of the discipline of physical science and its technological fruits. Our own country, though backward in this field at the beginning of the modern period, is steadily catching up since our political independence. When all our children, from the primary to the school final levels, apart from the few that go up to the university levels, will receive the blessings of education in modern science, reinforced by a wide range of technical training courses, we can expect to see a high level of practical efficiency in our nation. That will mark a tremendous augmentation of the human energy resources in our country, unprecedented in our long history. We have to take all steps to orient our current educational processes in the direction of motivating and guiding our students to acquire the energy resources available from knowledge, organization, and self-discipline. 'The nation must acquire scientific pluck and genius', said Swami Vivekananda even at the close of the last century. Our philosophy assures us that vast energy resources are present in every child; education is the *tapas,* the discipline, that helps in making them mainfest, like the striking that manifests the fire already present in a matchstick.

5. *Education to Foster Imagination*

But, *learning to do,* if carried too far without a corresponding stress on *learning to be,* will result in distortions in the human psyche and in the human social situation. These distortions, and the consequent human unfulfilments, constitute the dismal shadow on the otherwise bright human horizon of the modern scientific age. Practical efficiency, resulting from the training of the intellect and the will, in a context of physical health and vitality and yoked to an endless pursuit of organic satisfactions, may lead to the stifling of the imagination and of the spirit of creativity, and a general sagging of spirit. This is already afflicting modern civilization, including the stifling of the *roots* of pure science by the *charms* of the *fruits of* applied science. It reveals the age-old truth that the pursuit of profit, power, and pleasure can be only counter-productive, can only lead man to alienation, sorrow, and unfulfilment, if carried too far and without the guidance of a deeper philosophy of man. Training of the *imagination* is necessary to foster creativity; it is the energy behind pure science, art, ethics, and religion. Referring to the importance of this faculty, Lenin said (V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works,* Vol. 45, 5th Edition):

> 'This is an extremely precious faculty. To think that it is only indispensable to poets is a mistake and foolish prejudice, It is even needed in mathematics, for without imagination neither differential nor integral calculus would have been invented.'

The scope of current higher education in India and the world outside is thus severely restricted, due to its undue stress on *learning to do*; it has to be widened to include also *learning to be.* This is the only way by which the current situation of 'human *skill* as to *means*' accompanied by 'human *folly* as to *ends*', as remarked by the late Bertrand Russell *(Impact of Science on Society,* p. 120-21), can be transformed into human *wisdom* as to ends; and 'it follows that', he concluded by warning, 'unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow'.

6. *'Learning to Be' versus Adhyātma-Vidyā*

The nature and content of all education for *learning to be,* as much as for *learning to do,* depends upon human insights into the nature of man and his possibilities. *All education derives its scope and direction from the philosophy of man lying behind it.* If that philosophy sees man only as a product of material forces, and as a seeker of organic satisfactions, without any spiritual dimension beyond his organic level, education under its guidance must manifest, at some stage, qualitative privations in man and society. This is the state of man in modern Western civilization; it views him only in terms of physics and chemistry, biology and behaviouristic psychology. Such a materialistic philosophy touches man only on the surface, touches only 'man, the known', and fails to comprehend 'man, the unknown', in the striking terminology of the American scientist, the late Alexis Carrel. It may produce striking results in the short run, but prove disastrous in the long run. There is need to view man in depth; there is need for a new science, 'a science of human possibilities', as demanded by Sir Julian Huxley.

The world outside, as much as most people in India itself, do not yet know that it was such a science of human possibilities that India developed ages ago in her *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā,* and has continued to foster up to our own times, as Vedānta and Yoga, as the *Adhyātma-vidyā,* the *vidyā* or science of man in depth, the science and technique of a comprehensive spirituality encompassing action as well as contemplation, learning to do as well as learning to be. Indian philosophy sees no conflict between 'man, the known', and 'man, the unknown', between the physical man and the spiritual man.

It is high time that our people today, particularly our teachers and students, turn their critical interest and inquiry, and direct their searchlight of research, into this fascinating and rewarding constituent of their hoary national tradition. As we advance into this inquiry and research, we shall get an increasing grip on the human situation in our country, through the reformulation and implementation of educational goals and processes in the light of our own philosophy of man, whereby a happy synthesis of physical sciences with the science of spirituality will be achieved, resulting in total human enrichment, internal as well as external, qualitative as well as quantitative. Vedānta as the philosophy of man's material and spiritual welfare finds a beautiful statement in Śaṅkarācārya's two-page introduction to his commentary on the *Gītā,* which has been highly eulogized by Swami Vivekananda in our time in his Calcutta lecture on 'The Vedānta in All Its Phases' that

> 'It is one of the greatest works that this great man did among the many noble works of his noble life':

Dvividho hi vedokto dharmaḥ, pravṛtti-lakṣaṇo nivṛtti-lakṣaṇaśca, jagataḥ sthiti-kārṇaṁ, praṇınāṁ sākṣād abhyudaya-niḥśreyasa-hetuḥ— 'The Vedic *dharmu* is verily twofold, of the nature of action and of the nature of contemplation, meant to ensure the material welfare and the spiritual liberation of all beings, and conducive to the maintenance (in steady health) of the world order.'

7. *The Indian Vision of the Spiritual Unity of All Existence*

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* opens with a question, in its third verse, put by a seeker by name Śaunaka to Aṅgirasa, a householder and spiritual teacher: *Kasmin nu bhagavo vijñāte sarvamidaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati?*—'What is that (Truth), O blessed one, by knowing which all this manifested universe becomes known?' To this the teacher gives a reply in which all *vidyā* or science is classified into two: *parā vidyā,* higher science or knowledge, and *āparā vidyā,* lower knowledge; and the teacher defines *aparā vidyā* as all physical sciences, all positivistic knowledge, including all the second-hand spiritual knowledge contained in the sacred Vedas and other sacred books of religions. And he defines *parā vidyā* as *yayā tat akṣaram adhigamyate*—'that by which that imperishable Reality, Brahman or God, is realized.' The sages of the Upaniṣads after a critical and penetrating search into the depth of man—*agryayā buddhyā sūkṣmayā sūkṣma-darśibhiḥ*— 'by means of subtle *buddhi* or reason that has been trained by the sages in the search and discovery of subtle truths', as the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (3. 12) puts it—had discovered that imperishable Reality as the one and non-dual Self, the Atman. The opening verse of the *Īśā Upaniṣad* proclaims this sublime truth in a verse which has inspired the philosophy of the *Gītā* and innumerable spiritual seekers thereafter: *Īśāvāsyam idaṁ* *sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyam jagat*—'All this universe, in all its changing forms, is enveloped by the Lord.' The second verse of chapter five of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* which Śaṅkarācārya introduces in his commentary in the words: *Sa tu naika-śarīra-pura-vartī eva ātmā, kiṁ tarhi? sarva-puravartī*—'The Ātman is not a dweller in the 'city' of one (the human) body only; what else? He is the dweller in all bodies'.

Haṁsaḥ śuciṣat vasurantarikṣasat, hotā vediṣat atithirduroṇasat;
Nṛṣat varasat ~~ṛtasat vyomasat~~ abjā gojā ṛtajā adrijā, ṛtaṁ bṛhat—

'He is the swan dwelling in the heaven (in the form of the sun), the air filling the atmosphere, the fire dwelling on the altar, the holy guest in the house; (He is) in man, in gods, in the sacrifice, in the immensity of space; (He is) born in water (as the aquatic creatures), on the earth (as insects, reptiles, and mammals); (He is) born as (the fruit of) sacrifice, born of the earth (as rivers flowing from the mountains to the ocean): (He is) the True and the Great'.

This great verse, conveying a great vision, occurs also in the *Ṛg-Veda* (4.40.5), with the last word omitted. This is the vision that determined the Indian attitude to nature, to the physical, botanical, zoological, and human environments, not as an enemy to be conquered, as in the West, but as a friend to be understood and respected and used. As an enemy, man plunders and ravages nature; that attitude inevitably passes on to other human beings also, resulting in wars and colonial exploitations and slave trade; it produces serious ecological imbalances, until violated nature begins to violate and mutilate the perpetrator himself. This is the kick-back that is being experienced by modern man, and that is posing a serious challenge to human wisdom today.

8. *Sir J. C. Bose and the Scientific Vision of Unity*

The Indian vision of the spiritual 'unity' of all existence is, accordingly, receiving responsive echoes from increasing numbers of thinkers and scientists in the post-war West; criticisms of economics of affluence, of GNP as the false god of economic growth, of the unbridled pursuit of organic satisfactions etc., are increasing in volume and intensity; and books about nature, upholding the Indian vision and quoting Upaniṣadic passages, are coming out in the West more and more. One such recent book is *The Secret Life of Plants* by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, the sub-title of which reads: Astounding discoveries about the physical, emotional, and spiritual relations between plants and man. It is a fascinating account of the researches on the subject conducted in the United States, Soviet Russia, and other countries. Concluding their 'Introduction' to the book, the authors say:

> 'Evidence now supports the vision of the poet and the philosopher that plants are living, breathing, communicating creatures, endowed with personality and the attributes of soul. It is only we, in our blindness, who have insisted on considering them automata. ...'

What is of special interest to us in India, and to us in West Bengal, is its chapter 6, entitled: *Plant life magnified a hundred million times,* containing a moving and vivid account of the pioneering work of the late Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose in this vital field over five decades ago. The authors present, in the opening para, the Bose Institute in Calcutta as the *Indian Temple of Science* bearing the inscription: 'This temple is dedicated to the feet of God for bringing honour to India and happiness to the world.'

Starting his work of scientific research, in the field of physics, in a small twenty-foot-square room for a laboratory, and creating his own tools and instruments, Bose demonstrated the existence and propagation of wireless waves in 1895 in Calcutta. His work in physics led him imperceptibly to physiology and to botany, which convinced him of the tenuous nature of the boundary line between the 'non-living' metals and 'living' plants and humans, and of the truth of the 'fundamental unity among the apparent diversity of nature'. And on 10 May 1901, he addressed the Royal Institution in London, ending his lecture and experimental demonstration before a mixed appreciative, sceptical, scientific audience with these words (*ibid.*, pp. 86-87):

> 'I have shown you this evening autographic records of the history of stress and strain in the living and non-living. How similar are the writings! So similar indeed that you cannot tell one apart from the other. Among such phenomena, how can we draw a line of demarcation and say, here the physical ends, and there the physiological begins? Such absolute barriers do not exist.
>
> 'It was when I came upon the mute witness of these self-made records, and perceived in them one phase of a pervading unity that bears within it all things—the

> mote that quivers in ripples of light, the teeming life upon our earth, and the radiant suns that shine above us—it was then that I understood, for the first time, a little of that message proclaimed by my ancestors on the banks of the Ganges thirty centuries ago: "They who see but one, in all the changing manifoldness of this universe, unto them belongs Eternal Truth—unto none else, unto none else".'

Giving a sample of the Western reactions to these revolutionary scientific revelations presented by Bose during his trips to Europe in 1919 and 1920, the authors quote, what they term, the 'usually reserved' *Times* (*ibid.*, p. 94):

> 'While we in England were still steeped in the rude empiricism of barbaric life, the subtle Easterner had swept the universe into a synthesis and had seen the *one* in all its changing manifestations.'

The authors conclude the book in these words:

> 'The attraction of the seer's supersensible world, or worlds within worlds, is too great to forego, and the stakes are too high, for they may include survival for the planet. Where the modern scientist is baffled by the secrets of the life of plants, the seer offers solutions which, however incredible, make more sense than the dusty mouthings of academicians; what is more, they give philosophic meaning to the totality of life. ...'

9. *The 'Within' and the 'Without' of Nature*

The Upaniṣads, which saw all knowledge as one, presented education as man's search for knowledge in both the fields of *aparā vidyā* and *parā vidyā*. The first gives knowledge, while the second matures that knowledge into wisdom. Without this maturity into wisdom, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow, as remarked by Bertrand Russell in our time, and as admitted by Nārada in our ancient *Chāndogya Upaniṣad.* Without this maturity through *parā vidyā,* in some form or other, all *aparā vidyā,* as history has demonstrated in the past, and the modern West is demonstrating tragically in our own time, reduces itself into *human skill as to means and human folly as to ends.*

Man masters *the means* through the physical sciences, which study the *without* of nature; and he gets the capacity to wisely direct these means to *worthy creative ends* through the science of spirituality, which studies the *within* of nature. As evolution proceeds from the cosmic to the organic dimension, through *the first evolutionary breakthrough* of matter developing the capacity to duplicate itself in the living cell, it discloses, in the fact of *awareness* or *insipient* *mentality* first disclosed by nature in the cell, a *within* dimension to nature which, getting clarified, defined, and becoming the identifying feature of organic systems as evolution proceeds, becomes striking and unique, through a *second breakthrough*, as *self-awareness* and *self-knowledge*, when it rises to the level of man. 'Up to now has science ever troubled to look at the world other than from *without?*', asks paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin (*The Phenomenon of Man*, p. 52), and proceeds (p. 55):

> 'In the eyes of the physicist, nothing exists legitimately, at least up to now, except the *without* of things. The same intellectual attitude is still permissible in the bacteriologist, whose cultures (apart from substantial difficulties) are treated as laboratory reagents. But it is still more difficult in the realm of plants. It tends to become a gamble in the case of a biologist studying the behaviour of insects or coelenterates. It seems merely futile with regard to the vertebrates. Finally, it breaks down completely with man, in whom the existence of a *within* can no longer be evaded, because it is the object of a direct intuition and the substance of all knowledge.'

And Chardin continues (*ibid.*, p. 56):

> 'It is impossible to deny that, deep within ourselves, an "interior" appears at the heart of beings, as it were seen through a rent. This is enough to ensure that, in one degree or another, this "interior" should obtrude itself as existing everywhere in nature from all time. Since the stuff of the universe has an inner aspect at one point of itself, there is necessarily a *double aspect to its structure*, that is to say, in every region of space and time—in the same way, for instance, as it is granular: *Co-extensive with their without, there is a within to things*'.

Vedānta refers to this 'within' as *pratyak rūpa*, and to the 'without' as *parāk rūpa*, of the *tattva* or truth of the universe of experience, and calls it Brahman or Ātman, One without a second—*ekameva advitīyaṁ Brahma*, the spiritual unity of the 'within' and the 'without'.

10. *Parā Vidyā: India's greatest gift to Humanity*

Thus *Brahma-vidyā* becomes also *Adhyātma-vidyā*. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.2) describes it also as *sarva-vidyā-pratiṣṭhā*—'the basis and support of every other science'. Its pre-eminence among all sciences has been acknowledged uniformly by India's secular and spiritual tradition. Śrī Kṛṣṇa affirms it in the *Gītā* (10.32): *Adhyātma-vidyā vidyānām*—'I am *adhyātma-vidyā* among all *vidyās*. This pre-eminence has been reiterated in our own time by Swami Vivekananda. Speaking on *The Common Bases of Hinduism* in 1897 in Lahore, he said (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, p. 370, Eighth Edition):

> 'The great contribution to the sum total of the world's progress from India is the greatest, the noblest, the sublimest theme that can occupy the mind of man—it is philosophy and spirituality. Our ancestors tried many other things; they, like other nations, first went to bring out the secrets of external nature, as we all know; and, with their gigantic brains, that marvellous race could have done miracles in that line, of which the world could have been proud for ever. But they gave it up for something higher; something better rings out from the pages of the Vedas: "That science is the greatest which makes us know Him who never changes".'
>
> 'The science of nature, changeful, evanescent, the world of death, of woe, of misery, may be great, great indeed; but the science of Him who changes not, the Blissful One, where alone is peace, where alone is life eternal, where alone is perfection, where alone all misery ceases—that, according to our ancestors, was the sublimest science of all. After all, sciences that can give us only bread and clothes and power over fellowmen, sciences that can teach us only how to conquer our fellow-beings, to rule over them, which teach the strong to domineer over the weak—those they could have discovered if they willed. But praise be unto the Lord, they caught at once the other side, which was grander, infinitely higher, infinitely more blissful, till it has become the national characteristic. ...'

And, referring to the need for our people's laying hold of, and assimilating, this invaluable heritage of their nation in the modern age, for our own well-being and for the good of the rest of humanity, Swami Vivekananda said, in his reply to the Calcutta Address earlier the same year (*ibid.*, pp. 317-18):

> 'For a complete civilization the world is waiting, waiting for the treasures to come out of India, waiting for the marvellous spiritual inheritance of the race which, through decades of degradation and misery, the nation has still clutched to her breast. The world is waiting for that treasure. Little do you know how much of hunger and of thirst there is outside of India for these wonderful treasures of our forefathers. We talk here, we quarrel with each other, we laugh at, and we ridicule everything sacred, till it has become almost a national vice to ridicule everything holy. Little do we understand the heart-pangs of millions waiting outside the walls, stretching forth their hands for a little sip of that nectar which our forefathers have preserved in this land of India. Therefore, we must go out, exchange our spirituality for anything they have to give us; for the marvels of the region of spirit we will exchange the marvels of the region of matter. We will not be students always, but teachers also. There cannot be friendship without equality'.

11. *Sri Ramakrishna: The Modern Embodiment of Parā Vidyā*

The Indian experience and conviction of the pre-eminence and greatness of *parā vidyā,* and its being the consummation of all *aparā vidyā,* is glowingly illustrated, in our own time, in the appearance of Sri Ramakrishna as the very embodiment of *parā vidyā,* and in the arresting story of the discipleship of Narendra, a product of the modern education in *aparā vidyā,* under him. This story also clearly illustrates the Indian conviction that there is not only no opposition, but also an ever-present close kinship, between the two, and that they form but the two departments of one and the same *vidyā* or science, the science of Total Reality, the philosophy of *saṁyak-jñāna*. Thus, physical sciences and the science of spirituality form two inseparable aspects of the *saṁyagjñāna* of Vedānta. This is specially highlighted in the enigmatic verses, 9 to 14, of the *Īśā Upaniṣad,* as I have shown in *The Message of the Upaniṣads.*

Sri Ramakrishna represented the entire gamut of *parā vidyā* in its purest form, without any admixture of *aparā vidyā*. His spirited reply to his elder brother Ramakumar's insistence that he, like other youths around him, should go to school and continue his education in *aparā vidyā*. contains a profound value-estimate of all the so-called self-sufficient secular knowledge. In the words of *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* by his Eastern and Western Disciples (Fourth Edition, p. 33):

> 'His brother was desirous of arousing his interest in secular education; but Sri Ramakrishna (then, Gadadhar), who was already beginning to realize that he was born for a definite purpose, asked himself: "Shall I attain piety, devotion, and divine fervour by pursuing this education?" "No", was the emphatic reply of his mind. "Will it enable me to be as God-fearing and upright as my father?" "No", echoed his innate religious instinct. "Shall I be able to realize God through this education and escape from universal ignorance and the glamour of material enjoyments?" The same reply came from his heart. ... To his brother's persuasion, he said emphatically: "Brother what shall I do with a mere bread-winning education (*cāl kalā bāndhāno vidyā*)! I would rather acquire that wisdom which will illumine my heart and, getting which, one is satisfied for ever".'

And for the next twelve years, we find Sri Ramakrishna as a scientific explorer of the *within* of nature, an untiring experimenter in the field of *parā vidyā* in all its phases, and emerging, at the end of it all, as a wise, childlike, sweet, and lovable personality, at once human and divine, with an enormous attraction to draw all types and levels of human beings unto himself—atheists and agnostics, intellectuals and simple devotees, artists and leaders of society, representatives of the old Hindu tradition as much as representatives of the modern Western knowledge and culture, men as well as women. Introducing this Sri Ramakrishna to his Western readers, Romain Rolland says in his biography of him (*Life of Ramakrishna,* pp. 8-14):

> 'From the magnificent procession of spiritual heroes whom we shall survey later, I have chosen two men who have won my regard, because, with incomparable charm and power, they have realized this splendid symphony of the Universal Soul. They are, if one may say so, its Mozart and its Beethoven—*Pater Seraphicus* and Jove the Thunderer—Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. ...
>
> 'I am bringing to Europe, as yet unaware of it, the fruit of a new autumn, a new message of the Soul, the symphony of India, bearing the name Ramakrishna. ...
>
> 'The man whose image I here evoke was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people. Although he has been dead forty years (1886), his soul animates modern India. He was no hero of action like Gandhi, no genius in art or thought like Goethe or Tagore. He was a little village Brahmin of Bengal, *whose outer life was set in a limited frame without striking incident, outside the political and social activities of his time. But his inner life embraced the whole multiplicity of men and Gods.* ...
>
> 'It is my desire to bring the sound of the beating of that artery to the ears of fever-stricken Europe, which has murdered sleep. I wish to wet its lips with the blood of immortality.' (italics not by the author)

12. *Narendra's Discipleship Under Sri Ramakrishna: The Meeting of Parā Vidyā and Aparā Vidyā*

In that impressive procession of seekers came young Narendra who, in all that he had achieved till then by way of education and upbringing, *represented the best of the aparā vidyā* of the modern age. Physically strong, youthful, mentally alert, critical, doubting, and seeking, possessed of a vast store of traditional Indian and modern Western knowledge, Narendra was, to all appearances, the exact opposite of Sri Ramakrishna. With his inner life tossed on the high waves of doubts and tensions, Narendra approached Sri Ramakrishna, who was, as described by Śaṅkarācārya in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, nirindhana iva analaḥ*—'calm and tranquil like a fire after its fuel has been burnt down', and *ahetuka-dayā-sindhuḥ bandhurānamatām*—'an ocean of motiveless compassion and a friend of all who resort to him'. It was a momentous scene of *aparā vidyā* meeting *parā vidyā,* a scene that had been enacted several times before in India's spiritual history. The closest in kinship to this episode is the story of much-learned Nārada's discipleship under Sage Sanatkumāra of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* over four thousand years ago (7.1, 1-3):

Adhīhi bhagava iti ... So haṁ bhagavo mantraviodevāsmi, na ātmavit; śrutaṁ hyeva me bhagvaddṛśebhyaḥ tarati śokam ātmavit iti. So'haṁ bhagavaḥ socāmi. Taṁ mā bhagavān śokasya pāraṁ tārayatu, iti—

'Please teach me, O Blessed One. ... I am, O Blessed One, only a knower of words and their meanings, not a knower of the Self; and I have heard from great ones like you that only a knower of the Self crosses all sorrow. I am in sorrow, O Blessed One. Please help me, O Blessed One, to cross (the ocean of) sorrow (through the ship of *adhyātma-vidyā).'*

Sage Sanatkumāra then helped Nārada to rise from knowledge to wisdom and to cross the vast ocean of spiritual blindness and its attendant sorrows, says the Upaniṣad in its concluding verse of the chapter:

Tasmai mṛdita-kaṣāayāya tamasas-pāraṁ darśayati bhagavān Sanatkumāraḥ—

'To him, whose impurities of the heart had been washed away, the Blessed Sanatkumāra shows the supreme Truth beyond all darkness (of ignorance and sorrow).'

13. *Vivekananda: 'The Harmony of All Human Energy'*

Similarly, during the five years of his discipleship under Sri Ramakrishna, first at the Dakshineswar Kali Temple and later at the Cossipore garden house, Narendra matured his *aparā vidyā* into *parā vidyā,* matured his knowledge into wisdom, and became a perfect synthesis of both the physical sciences and the science of spirituality, and also, accordingly, of the West and the East. Portraying the Vivekananda that emerged at the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna in August 1886, out of the Narendra who had gone to him five years earlier, Romain Rolland says (*Life of Vivekananda,* p. 310):

> '*In the two words equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up.* He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four Yogas in their entirety, renunication and service, art and science, religion and action, from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways that he taught had its own limits, but he himself had been through them all, and embraced them all. As in a quadriga, he

held the reins of all four ways of truth, and he travelled towards Unity along them all simultaneously. *He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy.'* (italics not by the author)

14. *Need for a Synthesis of Aparā Vidyā and Parā Vidyā in Education*

Our education has to enable our students to achieve at least a fraction of this synthesis of East and West, spirituality and science, contemplation and action. *It is parā vidyā,* the *highest* education, that fosters in man ethical, aesthetic, and spiritual values, *including the moral values associated with pure science.* The harmony of all these values, and the intrinsic harmony between *parā vidyā* and *aparā vidyā,* always upheld in Vedānta, became revealed in our time in the deep spiritual kinship between Narendra and Sri Ramakrishna. All such values emerge from out of the depths of the human spirit at a certain stage of evolution and of some measure of mastery of the environment by man; they do not emerge from physical nature itself. It is folly, therefore, to believe or to expect that they will automatically result from industry or from technological manipulations of external nature and from the wealth resulting from such achievements. Protesting against such widely held modern folly, Bertrand Russell says (*Impact of Science on Society,* p. 77):

> 'The machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism. ...
>
> 'Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

It is thus obvious that, if the current school and university education is *high* and *higher* education, the education that Narendra received from Sri Ramakrishna, bearing such wonderful fruits of character, deep as the ocean and broad as the skies, is the *highest* education into which the other two, to fulfil themselves, must lead a child. Sri Ramakrishna's experience and example also make it clear that man can enter into, and benefit from, this *parā vidyā* from any stage or level of his *aparā vidyā* education. Wisdom can accompany, and enliven, and creatively stimulate, knowledge at any level—primary or secondary, under-graduate or post-graduate; it is also equally clear that, without a little of that wisdom, knowledge at any of these levels can become, in the long run, not a blessing but a curse to oneself and to society, a breeding ground of pride, selfishness, exploitation, violence, on the one hand, and alienation, loneliness, and psychic breakdowns, on the other. These have afflicted societies and civilizations in the past, and led them to decay and death. And modern Western civilization is also facing that challenge today. As our own country also is absorbing the energies of this modern civilization at a fast pace today, and is already experiencing some of its distortions, we shall be wise if we also open ourselves up to the eternal message of our *adhyātma-vidyā*, and generate a fresh capital of our spiritual energy resources, with a view to digesting, assimilating, and transforming the physical and mental energy resources of our highly technical age.

15. *'Vastu-tantra Jñāna' versus 'Puruṣa-tantra Jñāna'*

The modern age demands that *we meet the challenges of life with the challenge of an adequate philosophy;* that adequacy can be ensured only if that philosophy dares to achieve a happy synthesis between the physical sciences and the science of spirituality. And this is the status of our Vedānta among the passing philosophies of the world. *Kṣetra-kṣetrajñayor-jñānaṁ yat, tat jñānaṁ mataṁ mama*—'Philosophy, according to me', says Śri Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (13.2). 'is the unified knowledge of both the *kṣetra,* body, and the *kṣetrajña,* the knower of the body.' Vedānta is the only philosophy that is not only unafraid of the advance of all scientific knowledge, but also warmly welcomes it. Truth is its passion—*satyameva jayate,* and not any pleasing opinion or dogma. Like modern physical science, Vedānta fosters the critical, inquiring spirit, along with detachment, objectivity, precision, and the challenge of verification. No field of knowledge can foster these intellectual virtues and graces, unless it is on the track of objective truth, and not of personal, subjective fancies.

The limitations of physical science, admitted by several modern scientists themselves, proceed from the adjective. *physical* ; but science itself is not limited similarly. It is not limited by, or tied down to, any particular order of facts or subject-matter, as clarified by the biologist, the late Arthur J. Thompson, in his *Introduction to Science.* Any group of facts, he says, can be studied scientifically, and conclusion drawn, if such conclusions follow from a respect for facts, and can face the challenge of verification. Reality may be studied, but not exhausted, by the physical sciences, whose limitations proceed from their dependence entirely on sense-data. This limitation has been pointed out by the mathematician-astronomer, the late Sir Arthur Eddington, in his book: *The Philosophy of Physical Science* (p. 16):

> 'Let us suppose that an ichthyologist is exploring the life of the ocean. He casts a net into the water and brings up a fishy assortment. Surveying his catch, he proceeds, in the usual manner of a scientist, to systematize what it reveals. He arrives at two generalizations:
>
> 1. No sea-creature is less than two inches long;
> 2. All sea-creatures have gills.
>
> 'These are both true of his catch, and he assumes tentatively that they will remain true however often he repeats it. ... His generalization is perfectly true of the class of creatures he is talking about—a selected class perhaps, but he would not be interested in making generalizations about any other class.'

Earlier, Eddington had said in his Preface to the above book (p. IX):

> 'I am not among those who think that, in the search for truth, all aspects of human experience are to be ignored, save those which are followed up in physical science. But I find no disharmony between a philosophy which embraces the wider significance of human experience and the specialized philosophy of physical science, even though the latter relates to a system of thought of recent growth whose stability is yet to be tested.'

When physical science or scientists forget or ignore this limitation implied in the adjective, *physical,* and pronounce judgements on life or reality as a whole, it or they become dogmatic, and forsake truth-seeking; one such dogma that is stifling the spirit of modern science is *materialism,* against which distinguished scientists have protested and warned. After terming materialism *an intruder* earlier in his book: *Methods and Results* (Volume I, p. 161), Thomas Huxley, the collaborator of Darwin, repudiates materialism as a philosohpy of life (*ibid.*, pp. 164-65):

> 'If we find that the ascertainment of the order of nature is facilitated by using one terminology, or one set of symbols, rather than another, it is our clear duty to use the former; and no harm can accrue, so long as we bear in mind that we are dealing merely with terms and symbols. ...

> 'But the man of science, forgetting the limits of philosophical inquiry, slides from these formulae and symbols into what is commonly understood by materialism, seems to me to place himself on a level with the mathematician who should mistake the x's and y's, with which he works his problems, for real entities—and with this further disadvantage, as compared with the mathematician, that the blunders of the latter are of no practical consequence, *while the errors of systematic materialism may paralyse the energies and destroy the beauty of a life.'* (italics not by the author)

16. *Adhyātma-vidyā as Vastu-tantra Jñāna*

The scientific characteristic of Vedānta is boldly brought out by Śaṅkarācārya, while presenting the great theme of *Brahma-jijñāsā,* inquiry into Brahman, in his commentary on the *Brahmasūtras,* and while expounding the scientific frame of mind, in his commentary on the *Gītā.* In the former, he makes a distinction between *vastu-tantra-jñāna,* knowledge depending on, and arising from, the *vastu* or existing reality, and *puruṣa-tantra-jñāna,* knowledge depending on the *puruṣa,* the person, on the moods and fancies and interests of the person concerned. *Vastu-tantra-jñāna.* as knowledge of an existing fact, is independent of the knowing person; that knowledge is only a *discovery* of the fact, but does not *create* it; whereas, *puruṣa-tantra-jñāna,* is knowledge depending on the person, and is, accordingly, susceptible of being held, altered, or abolished, depending on the person concerned—*kartum, akartum anyathākartum śakyate, puruṣa-tantratvāt eva.* There is a vast field of human preferences constituting such *puruṣa-tantra* knowledge, and they have their legitimate role to play in human life. But God and soul, as understood in Vedānta, belong to the field of *vastu-tantra* inquiry and knowledge—the *yat sākṣāt aparokṣāt Brahma, ya Ātmā sarvāntaraḥ*—'Brahman, immediate and direct, which is the innermost Self of all', as presented in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.4.1). Brahman as the Self of all is an ever-present Reality, as the knower behind all acts of perception and knowledge, whose negation is an impossibility; for it is the very Self of him who does the negation; *ya eva nirākartā, tasyaiva-ātmatvāt.* This Brahman is not any extracosmic deity of the usual run of monotheism, which is a logical postulate, or merely held by faith, but is not capable of verification. But the Brahman of the Upaniṣads, being the Self of all, is the very basis and consummation of experience—*anubhavāvasānatvāt bhūta-vastu-viṣayatvāt ca brahmajñānasya*—'because the knowledge of Brahman is consummated in experience and refers, therefore, to an existing *vastu* or fact'. It is unknown, in the state of spiritual ignorance, but it is not unknowable; for it is the very Self of the knower and, hence, is more intimately known than any sense object. But this knowledge is obstructed and obscured by the self-not-self mix-up in normal experience, calling for a discriminative inquiry.

Being the Self of all, Brahman is *cit-svarūpam* and *advitīyam,* of the very nature of consciousness, infinite and non-dual. Says the nuclear physicist Erwin Schrodinger on the nature of consciousness (*What Is Life,* Epilogue pp. 90-91):

> 'Consciousness is never experienced in the plural, only in the singular. ... Consciousness is a singular of which the plural is unknown; that there *is* only one thing and that what seems to be a plurality is merely a series of different aspects of this one thing, produced by a deception (the Indian *Māyā*).'

The sages of the Upaniṣads realized, through a penetrating search, this infinite and immortal Atman in themselves, behind the ever-changing *kośas* or sheaths of the body, the nervous system, the mind, the intellect, and the ego. Says Yama, the teacher, to Naciketā, the young student, in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (3.12):

Eṣa sarveṣu bhūteṣu gūḍho ātmā na prakāśate;
Dṛśyate tvagryayā buddhyā sūkṣmayā sūkṣma-darśibhiḥ—

'This Ātman, (being) hidden in all beings, is not manifest to all; but It *can be* realized by all who are trained to inquire into subtle truths, by means of their sharp and subtle *buddhi* or reason.'

The impurities of the mind constitute the obstructions to the knowledge of this ever-present divine immortal dimension of man. These impurities are centred in the ego, in its attachments and aversions and bondage to the organic system. Search for truth, either in the external world which yields pure science, or in the internal world which yields pure spirituality, calls for the elimination of these impurities, which alone gives the mind the power to penetrate from the surface to the depths of nature, external or internal. This is the scientific spirit and temper which is highlighted in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's exhortation, as the incarnation of the One Divine Self in all beings, to Arjūna in the *Gītā*' and which is amplified in Śaṅkarāchārya's commentary on the same (7.27-28):

Icchā-dveṣa-samutthena dvandva-mohena bhārata;
Sarva-bhūtāni saṁmohaṁ sarge yāntı parantapa—

'By the delusion of the pairs of opposites arising from attachment and aversion, O descendant of Bharata, all beings are fallen into deep delusion at birth, O scorcher of foes.'

Yeṣam tvantagataṁ pāpaṁ jananaṁ puṇya-karmaṇām;
Te dvandva-moha-nirmutkāḥ bhajante māṁ dṛḍha-vratāḥ—

'But those men of virtuous deeds whose impurities have been destroyed—they, freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, worship Me with firm resolve.'

Commenting on the first, Śaṅkarācārya observes:

Nahi icchā-dveṣa-doṣa-vaśikṛta-cittasya yathā-bhūtārtha-viṣaya-jñānam utpadyate, bahirapi; kimu vaktavyaṁ, tābhyām āviṣṭa-buddheḥ, saṁamūḍhasya, pratyagātmani bahupratibandhe, jnanaṁ na utpadyata iti. ... Yataḥ evaṁ, atah tena dvandva-mohena pratibaddha-prajñānāni sarva-bhutāni saṁmohitāni, mama ātmabhūtaṁ na jānanti, ataḥ evam ātma-bhāvena māṁ na bhajante—

'For it is well known that, knowledge of things as they are, even in the external world, cannot rise in the minds of those who are under the thraldom of attachment and aversion; if this is so, what wonder is there that knowledge of the inner Self, which is faced with many obstacles, does not arise in those who are enslaved by them and consequently are deeply deluded! Hence all beings, whose reason is obstructed and deeply deluded by the delusion of these pairs of opposites, do not know Me, who am their very Self, and hence also, they do not worship Me as their own Self.'

17. *Vedānta Philosophy: A Synthesis of Science and Spirituality*

In his parting message, on the eve of his departure from this mortal world, given to his disciple Uddhava, Śrī Kṛṣṇa expounds this Indian vision of the unity of the physical sciences and the science of spirituality, and their joint contribution to total human welfare and fulfilment, in five remarkable verses, which hold a vital lesson for our people today (*Śrīmad Bhagavatam*, 11.7.19-23):

Prāyeṇa manujā loke lokatattva-vicakṣaṇāḥ:
Samuddharanti hi ātmānam ātmānaiva aśubhāśayāt—

'In this world, human beings are generally capable to inquire into the truth of the (external) world: and they uplift themselves (through that) from all sources of *aśubha*, or evil'.

Atmano gurar-ātmaiva puruṣasya viśeṣataḥ:
Yat pratyakṣā-numānābhyāṁ śreyo'sau anuvindate—

'Specially in the case of man (unlike the sub-human species where nature does everything), one's *gurú* or guide is, verily, oneself: accordingly, man achieves his development and welfare through the discipline of (his mind) in *pratyakṣa*, direct sense perception, and *anumāna*, inference (inductive and deductive), based on it.'

Puruṣatveca māṁ dhīrāḥ sāṅkhya-yoga-viśāradāḥ;
Avistarāṁ prapaśyanti sarva-śaktyupabṛṁhitam—

In the case of man, moreover, wise men, who have mastered the science and technique of spirituality, *sāṅkhya-yoga-viśāradāḥ;* realize clearly, within themselves, Me (the universal Self of all), the unlimited source of all the (limited) energies (in man and nature).'

Eka-dvi-tri-catuṣ-pādo bahu-pādas-tathā-padaḥ;
Bahvaḥ santi purāḥ sṛṣṭā tāsāṁ me mānuṣī priyā—

'Many are the 'cities' (bodies or organisms) projected by Me (in evolution)—one-footed, two-footed, three-footed, four-footed, many-footed, and also without any feet. Among all these, the human (organism) is very dear to Me.'

Atra māṁ mārgayanty-addhā yukt, hetubhir-īśvaram;
Gṛhyamāṇair-guṇair-liṅgaih agrāhyam anumānataḥ—

'(Because) here (in this human body), yogis seek and realize clearly, through intimations or clues which reason detects in normal human experience, Me, who am the Lord of all and beyond the grasp of (mere) logical inference.'

Culture, civilization, and all forms of political, economic, and social security and freedom and welfare, says Śrī Kṛṣṇa, are the products of disciplined human intelligence, backed by faith in himself and faith in the meaningfulness of the universe. Man achieves these through systematic scientific investigations into the external, natural and social environments. The same systematic investigation, carried into the inner field of experience, achieves for him spiritual freedom and life fulfilment.

This is the significance of the Vedāntic testament contained in the last verse of the *Gītā:*

Yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo, yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ;
Tatra śrih, vijayo, bhūtih, dhruvā nitiḥ, matir mama—

'Where there is Kṛṣṇa, the Master of Yoga, where there is Arjuna, the wielder of the bow, there (in that society), I am convinced, (dynamic) wealth, victory, general social welfare, and unshakable justice (shall prevail).'

The Vedānta and Yoga taught in the *Gītā* mark the confluence of two energy streams, namely, the energy of vision and the energy of practical implementation, the energy of meditation and the energy of action. It signifies the confluence of the energy of Kṛṣṇa, the unarmed charioteer of Arjuna and the Master of Yoga, and the energy of Arjuna, fully armed for heroic action under the guidance of Kṛṣṇa.

18. *Vedānta and Education of the Complete Man*

Vedānta conceives as the instrument of human growth in his three dimensions, namely, physical, mental, and spiritual. Such education continues throughout life, unless stagnation sets in at any stage, during or beyond school or university. There is no gulf between secular education and spiritual education, except what one creates through ignorance and complacency and, consequently, reaps the harvest of stagnation of life-energy at the organic level. It is this stagnation that Vedānta warns against as *saṁsāra,* worldliness. Life in the world, or *saṁsāra,* is not the same as being worldly, or a *saṁsāri*. Live in the world, or *saṁsāra,* says Sri Ramakrishna:

> 'There is no harm. But allow not *samsara*, worldliness, to live in you: that will make for life stagnation. A boat will be on the water; that is the right place for the boat. But water should not be *in* the boat; that is the wrong place for the water; it will make the boat stagnant and unfit for the purpose for which it is meant.

19. *The Phenomenon of Homeostasis in Evolution*

Nature has endowed man with the organic capacity to understand the world as well as himself. From the stage of the higher mammals up to man, says biology, nature has been developing and perfecting the mechanism of a built-in equilibrium, thermostatic to begin with and homeostatic later, within the organism itself. Dealing with the evolutionary significance of this mechanism, the Bristol neurologist Grey Walter says (*The Living Brain*, p. 16):

> 'The acquisition of internal temperature control, thermostasis, was a supreme event in neural, indeed, in all natural history. It made possible the survival of mammals on a cooling globe. That was its general importance in evolution. Its particular importance was that it completed, in one section of the brain, an automatic system of stabilization for the vital functions of the organism—a condition known as homeostasis. *With this arrangement, other parts of the brain are left free for functions not immediatetly related to the vital engine or the senses, for functions surpassing the wonders of homeostasis itself.*' (italics not by the author)

20. *The Significance of Homeostasis*

And quoting the significant words of the great French physiologist Claude Bernard that *a fixed interior milieu is the condition for the free life,* Grey Walter continues (*ibid.*, pp. 16-17):

> 'Those who had the privilege of sitting under Sir Joseph Barcroft at Cambridge owe much to him for his explanation of this dictum and its application to physiological research. We might otherwise have been scoffers; for "the free life" is not a scientific expression. He translated the saying into simple questions and guided us to the answers. "What has the organism gained," he asked, "by the constancy of temperature, constancy of hydrogen-ion concentration, constancy of water, constancy of sugar, constancy of oxygen, constancy of calcium, and the rest?" With his gift for quantitative expression, it was all in the day's work for him to demonstrate the individual intricacies of the various exquisitely balanced feedback mechanisms. But I recall in his manner a kind of modest trepidation, as if he feared we might ridicule his flight of fancy, when he gave us this illustration of homeostasis and its peculiar virtue:
>
> '"How often have I watched the ripples on the surface of a still lake made by a passing boat, noted their regularity and admired the patterns formed when two such ripple-systems meet ... *but the lake must be perfectly clam.* ... To look for high intellectual development in a *milieu* whose properties have not become stabilized, is to seek. ... ripple-patterns on the surface of the stormy Atlantic"'

Homeostasis as a fixed interior *milieu* is not an end in itself. It is just a condition, a necessary condition, for life forging ahead to higher and higher evolutionary levels. And the highest level to be reached is the perfect freedom of the human spirit, by detaching the new significant datum of the self from its organic limitations and making it realize its true nature. Nature has achieved physical homeostasis for man; man has now to achieve for himself, by himself, through the organic capacities which nature has provided him with, a mental homeostasis with a view to realizing the Atman that is behind the mind. After explaining that, through homeostasis, *'the upper brain is freed from the menial tasks of the body, the regulating functions being delegated to the lower brain'*, *(ibid.,* p. 17), Grey Walter significantly remarks (p. 18):

> 'For mammals all, homeostasis was survival; for man, emancipation'

21. *Homeostasis versus Yoga*

And relating this physical homeostasis of organic evolution to the mental and spiritual homeostasis of Yoga, Grey Walter concludes (p. 19):

> 'And once again, as new horizons open, we become aware of old landmarks. The experience of homeostasis, the perfect mechanical calm which it allows the brain, has been known for two or three thousand years under various appellations. It is the physiological aspect of all the perfectionist faiths—nirvāṇa, the abstraction of the Yogi, the peace that passeth understanding, the derided "happiness that lies within"; *it is a state of grace in which disorder and disease are mechanical slips and errors.*' (italics not by the author)

The struggle to go beyond organic pulls and limitations, and realize the freedom of the spirit in Self-realization, needs to be supported and sustained by a stable moral life; only when this base is secured can man carry forward the struggle direct into the inner world and fashion relevant disciplines, and forge newer instruments out of his psycho-physical energy system, among which a tough *manas* and a pure *buddhi* are the most important. This results in a second homeostasis, which is acquired by man himself with the help of his higher brain after freeing it from thraldom to the organic system, and which is comprehensively called, in Vedānta and Yoga, *sama and dama*, discipline of the mind and discipline of the sense organs.

22. *The Nature of Yoga*

The state in which the mind succeeds in stilling the clamour the sense organs and itself becomes pure, steady, and still is called Yoga. This is the inner condition which spiritual seekers down the ages have striven to attain, and which many have attained, and have realized God, the innermost Self of all, as affirmed by Śri Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (4.10):

Vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhā, manmayā, mām upāśritāḥ;
Bahavo jñāna-tapasā pūtā, mad-bhāvamāgatāḥ—

'Freed from attachment, fear, and anger, absorbed in Me (the One Self in all), and taking refuge in Me, very many people, purified by *the tapas* of *jñāna,* discipline of spiritual knowledge, have attained to oneness with Me.'

The same truth is also affirmed by Gauḍapāda *in his Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad Kārikā* (2.35):

Vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhaih munibhiḥ veda-pāragaiḥ;
Nirvikalpo hyayaṁ dṛṣṭaḥ, prapañcopaśamo' dvayaḥ—

'This transcendental non-dual state, in which relative existence is overcome, has been attained by sages who were free from attachment, fear, and anger, and had gone beyond (the mandate of) the Vedas (i.e., of all scriptures, in view of their entering the field of *experiment,* and getting the *experience,* of spirituality)'.

From the time of the Upaniṣads, about four thousand years ago, and probably even earlier, our country has developed a full-fledged science and technique of this subject, the subject of Yoga. In the words of Yama, in his teaching to the boy Naciketā in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (6. 10-11):

Yadā pañcāvatiṣḥante prānāni manasā saha;
Buddhiśca na vićeṣṭate, tām āhuḥ paramaṁ gatim.
Tāṁ yogamiti manyante—

'When the five sense organs of knowledge remain steady, along with the *manas,* and even the *buddhi* does not act—that is the supreme state, say (the sages). They (the sages) consider that (state) as Yoga.'

23. *The 'Sthita-prajñā' of the Gītā*

This results in the conversion of the inner life of man *into a* *unique laboratory* for some mighty experiment and experience—the experience of his infinite and immortal nature. The picture of man, full and tranquil within, and spiritually free, as a result of the knowledge of his true nature as the Atman, which is, in the words of Śaṅkarācārya, *śuddha-buddha-mukta-svabhāva,* ever pure, ever awakened, ever free by nature, as a result of which he ceases to be a slave of his organic system, as all other organisms in nature are, has been graphically drawn in many passages in India's rich spiritual and even secular literature. The following three verses of the *Gītā,* in the course of its inspiring description of a *sthita-prajña,* man of steady wisdom, are typical of all such (2.64, 67, and 70):

Rāgadveṣa-viyyktaistu viṣayān indriyaiśaran;
Atma-vayśyaiḥ vidheyātmā prasādam adhigacchati—

'The self-disciplined man, with the senses under his control, and free from attachment and aversion, verily attains tranquillity, (even while) moving freely among the sense objects with his sense organs.'

Indriyāṇāṁ hi caratām yanmano' nuvidhīyate,
Tadasya harati prajnāṁ vayur-navaṁ ivāmbhasi—

'In the case of him whose mind follows (helplessly) in the wake of his wandering senses, his wisdom also is carried away, like a ship (being carried away helplessly) by a gale on the ocean.'

Āpūryamāṇam acala-pratiṣṭham
samudramāpaḥ praviśanti yadvat;
Tadvat kāmāḥ yaṁ praviśanti sarve
sa śāntimāpnoti na kāma- kāmi—

'As into the ocean, brimful and still, flow the waters (of mighty rivers, without disturbing its stillness), even so do all desires enter into the sage; such a one attains peace, and not the one who runs after desires.'

Bhīṣma tells Yudhiṣṭhira in the *Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva,* that as man, the known, is subject to mortality, man, the unknown, is the focus of immortality (10.169.28; Bhandarkar Edition):

Amṛtaṁcaivamṛtyuśca dvayaṁ dehe pratiṣṭhitam;
Mṛtyurāpadyate mohāt, satyenāpadyate mṛtam—

'Immortality as well as mortality are both established within the body (of every one); by (the pursuit of) delusion, one attains mortality, by (the pursuit of) truth, one attains immortality.'

24. *The Inter-relationship of Science and Spirituality in the Indian Context*

With this impressive national background of philosophical thought on the one hand, and shining spiritual examples on the other, the relationship between science and spirituality is going to be far different, in the Indian context, from the mutually hostile and unhappy and, consequently, mutually weakening, relationship, that existed, and still exists, between the two in the West, and that unfortunately dominates the understanding and thinking, due to the passing exigencies of current Western dominance, of many of the educated men and women of our own country. There are indications that the higher reaches of modern Western science, and certainly some outstanding Western scientists, are getting faint glimpses of the spiritual dimensions of the human personality. The concept of psycho-social evolution in twentieth-century biology raises evolution from the organic to the spiritual level, at the human stage. What biology calls psycho-social evolution is what Vedānta would call the early stages of man's spiritual growth, *ātma-vikāsa*, of which ethical awareness, concern for other human and all living beings, and the spirit of love, dedication, and service, are but by-products. Man ensures his spiritual growth by cultivating a spirit of love, dedication, and service in the outer field of action, and meditation and its allied processes in the inner field. This is the Yoga of the *Gītā,* which is defined by Śri Kṛṣṇa in the second chapter both as *samatvam* and *karmasu kauśalam. Samatvam* is the second homeostasis, to be achieved by man himself, as referred to earlier. *Kauśalam* in *karma,* dexterity or efficiency in action, refers to both productive social efficiency outside, which is much emphasized in modern technical civilization, and spiritual personality efficiency within, which this civilization largely neglects and of which it knows also very little. The chariot imagery in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (3.3 to 9) presents man's psycho-physical organism as an efficient instrument which, if left to itself and un-integrated, will land man in disaster, but which, if kept trim and integrated under *buddhi,* enlightened Reason, will take him to all-round life fulfilment.

Clear thinking is the characteristic of Vedānta and modern science; *vastu-svarūpaṁ sphuṭa-bodha-cakṣuṣa svenaiva vedyam*—'the truth of the Ātman as a *vastu,* fact, is to be known by each one by himself or herself, through *sphuṭa-bodha-cakṣu,* clear eye of understanding or reason', says Śaṅkarācārya in his *Vivekacuḍāmaṇi.* Modern environmental and ecological problems may be making for the unpopularity of technology, or of over-technology. But pure science will always remain as one of the noblest pursuits of man. And we need more and more of this discipline; and we need more and more of the science of spirituality. Even a little spiritual growth will enrich man, steady his character, make him strong and fearless, and integrate him with others in society. With respect both to science and spirituality, it is not a question of everything or nothing; even a little growth in scientific attitude and temper, and in spirituality, will make a vast difference in the creative and positive energy resources in a man or in a society. That is the meaning of Śri Kṛṣṇa's emphasis on this truth in verse 40 of the second chapter of the *Gītā:*

Svalpam-apvsya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayāt—
'Even a little of this *dharma* will save (man) from great fear.

25. *Conclusion*

When our nation awakens to this truth, our people will learn to substitute self-discipline for the imposed discipline given to us by the present National Emergency, which is a blessing only in the short run. This awakening, followed by the march to the nation's appointed destiny, is the message of the clarion call of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad: Uttiṣṭhata! jāgrata! prāpya varān nibodhata,* which, as freely rendered by the modern sage, Swami Vivekananda, can provide the stimulus and the inspiration to our nation and the rest of the world to march onward to truth and fulfilment with steady steps and firm mind: 'Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

13

MAN-MAKING EDUCATION*

1. *Introduction*

Today's seminar has a very important subject for discussion, namely, *Swami Vivekananda's idea of man-making education*. Sri Avinashilingam has given us, in his welcome speech, some of the salient ideas associated with this great subject. The theme is very vast and our time is very limited. I shall confine myself, therefore, to dealing with a few important items in this great subject of man-making.

2. *Indonesia and Swami Vivekananda*

Swami Vivekananda's ideas on education are receiving increasing attention of the people, not only in India, but also in the world outside. I was very much struck by my experience with late President Sukarno of Indonesia in December 1964 when, while releasing a book of selections from Swami Vivekananda, in the Indonesian language and in English, entitled respectively *Suara Vivekananda* and *The Teachings of Vivekananda*, to which he had contributed a beautiful 'Introduction', he expressed his profound admiration for Vivekananda's message of man-making. It was the occasion of Vivekananda's Centenary celebrations at a TV session in his Merdeka palace. The following is the text of his 'Introduction' in which he has also quoted a stirring passage from Vivekananda:

> 'Swami Vivekananda! what a name! He was one of those who gave so much inspiration to me—inspiration to be strong, inspiration to be a servant of God, inspiration to be a servant of my country, inspiration to be a servant of the poor, inspiration to be a servant of mankind.
>
> 'He it was who said: "We have wept long enough; no more weeping, but stand on your feet and be men!"
>
> Yours, Soekarno.

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* Based on the transcription of the extempore inaugural address at the seminar on *Inculcation of Swami Vivekananda's Teachings in Educational Institutions*, held from April 30 to May 3, 1979, as part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore

He told me that he kept Vivekananda's volumes always by his bed. He also said to me that, when his Minister of Education had told him that he would be going out of Jakarta to address an educational conference, he had told the minister: 'You are going to speak at an educational conference? But have you studied Vivekananda on education? First study him and then speak on education.' The minister concerned then studied Vivekananda and gave his speech at the conference, and gave me a copy of it.

Later, at the Bandung University in Indonesia, when I asked the education faculty students on what subject they wanted me to address them, they all said: On *Vivekananda's ideas on education!* And after the lecture and question-answer session, the one who thanked said: please come again and speak to us on this subject for a whole month!

3. *Australia and Swami Vivekananda*

Last June, I was in Sydney in Australia. I was invited to speak on Swami Vivekananda's ideas on education at its Macquarie University. A Professor of its Educational Faculty, Professor Blair Stone, had read the book published by this Vidyalaya: *Education,* by Swami Vivekananda, carrying a brief but eloquent introduction from Gandhiji, one of the most beautiful introductions which you can get for any book:

> 'Surely, Swami Vivekananda's writings need no introduction from anybody. They make their own irresistable appeal.
>
> Yours, Bapu.'

This book he had studied, with much interest, along with my 1966 Calcutta University Convocation Address on *India's Educational Vision.* He had written to me saying that he would very much like me to address his university on the subject of Vivekananda's ideas on education.

He had organized a meeting at the University on 19th June 1978, at which I spoke on *Education in the Modern Age: New Dimensions.* After the lecture, before and during dinner at which many professors from different faculties were present, there was an animated discussion, in a very informal atmosphere, when many of those present felt that something profound on the subject of education was coming from India through Swami Vivekananda. This is just the beginning. People all over the world will realize in due course what an outstanding personality was Swami Vivekananda whose message is not meant for a time, is not meant for a small group of people, but is meant for all time and for all humanity.

4. *U.S.S.R. and Vivekananda*

This truth is also demonstrated further by what I experienced in October 1977, when I was at the Moscow State University to address its hall-full audience of students, research scholars, and professors on the subject chosen by the university, namely, *Swami Vivekananda: His Humanism.* What is unique in Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of Humanism? I went, I spoke, I answered questions; fortunately all could understand simple slow-spoken English and there was no need for a Russian translation.

The most important question asked by a professor related to Swamiji's teaching about the divine spark in every human being: Is there such a divine dimension in man? Swamiji, will you please explain this further? I am deeply interested in this idea.

I took about ten minutes to explain this wonderful Vedāntic truth of the divine in the heart of all beings, and especially in all men and women and children, and its relevance to all human groups, including all Marxists. It is this truth that proclaims the possibility of human freedom and human equality. It envisages man becoming ethical and moral, becoming humanized, naturally and spontaneously, by a spiritual unfoldment from within, and not by mere external compulsions of the forces, ultimately needing no such external conditioning at all. By steadily manifesting the divine already within him or her, man becomes truly free and at peace with himself or herself and also with the world.

The next morning, I was invited to address a group of Russian writers and scholars on a subject chosen by them, namely, *Swami Vivekananda's Impact on India.* When I finished speaking and sat down, a well-known writer, Dr. Alexie Litman, whose insightful book in Russian on Philosophical thought in Independent India, entitled *Philosophskaya misl Nezavisimoi Indii*, I had got reviewed in the *Bulletin* of our Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, in its August 1967 issue, got up and said, glancing round at those present: I accept every word that the Swami has spoken on the subject today. The audience joined heartily in the discussion that followed.

5. *'The Splendid Symphony of the Universal Soul'*

As people come to know more and more about this great teacher and his message, they become more and more drawn to both, because both teacher and his message are rational and universal and intensely human. A universal message can come only from a universal mind. Romain Rolland, in his *Life of Ramakrishna,* presents Ramakrishna and Vivekananda as: *'the splendid symphony of the Universal Soul.'*

This will become more and more recognised as years roll on. In India today, there is a slowly and steadily growing interest in Swami Vivekananda's ideas on education, on religion, on rural development, in fact, on all aspects of human development. And this is most welcome. One great problem in India is human development. Swami Vivekananda has successfully endeavoured to rouse our nation to this problem and guide it into healthy lines. We have a great philosophy; we have a great spiritual tradition; and we have produced a few fully developed personalities. But when we look around our India, we see how deplorable is the condition of millions and millions of our people.

6. *Swami Vivekananda's Reaction to the Low Human Situation in His Country*

Swami Vivekananda saw the glory of man proclaimed in our scriptures fully manifested in his own master, Sri Ramakrishna. And he realized that glory in himself. But when he wandered about India as a *parivrājaka,* he did not see even a fraction of that glory in his people. In the last century, the human condition was extremely bad in our country. Since then, we have crossed nearly a century now, and the nation has made some progress in the direction of human development. Still, it is good for us to know today what conditions existed then, what Swamiji saw about the human situation in the India of his time. Gods and goddesses and temples and religions we had in plenty; but the condition of man was extremely low. Swamiji expressed his reaction to the utter callousness of the Indian upper classes towards the low condition of millions of their own countrymen in a very powerful language in one of his letters from U.S.A. (*Complete Works,* Vol. V, p. 16; Edition):

> 'I pity them; it is not their fault. They are children, yea veritable children, though they be great and high in society. Their eyes see nothing beyond their little horizon of a few yards— The routine-work, eating, drinking, earning, and begetting, following each other in mathematical precision. ...Their sleep is never disturbed. ...They little dream of the ages of tyranny, mental, moral, and physical, that has reduced the image of God (that is man) to a mere beast of burden; the emblem of the Divine Mother (that is woman) to a slave to bear children; and life itself a curse.'

That was the type of men and women he saw in his country then. Men and women reduced to *creature* levels. The word creature, *jantu,* in Sanskrit, appears again and again in our Sanskrit literature. *Jantu,* or creature means something that is shaped by forces outside of itself and which is, consequently, not free. India was a *creature of history* for centuries; other nations created history; and the people of India became *victims* of that history; this was because the people had reduced themselves to the condition of creatures. They never realized their own inherent dignity and glory and strength as human beings. Swami Vivekananda was appalled to see that low condition of our people, of our upper, as much as of our lower, classes, in the last century. Centuries of exploitation, oppression, and callous neglect had reduced fine specimens of humanity to that low state. The slave and the slave-holder are equally bereft of human glory; if you hold a man in a gutter, you have to be in the gutter yourself. Swamiji's reaction to what he witnessed was tremendous; and we will note in that sentence the uniqueness of that reaction to that depressing experience of his.

7. *Man: The Theme of His Kanyākumārī Meditation.*

Towards the end of his wanderings, he reached Kanyākumārī, at the confluence of the three oceans at the southern extremity of our vast country, towards the end of 1892; and he meditated long, sitting on the rock off its coast. And for the first time in the history of religion, the subject of meditation of a great spiritual teacher was not a god sitting in the sky, but man down below on the Indian earth, man in whom Vedānta sees God enthroned. What has befallen man in India? Man, in whom the highest God is present, has lost his glory and dignity in my country. This was his theme of meditation, sitting on that last bit of Indian rock as he later referred to it. How to make man in India, and also everywhere, conscious of his or her own real nature? How to install man in his or her own dignity and glory and power?—that was the main search of Vivekananda during his wanderings in India, during his meditation at Kanyākumāri and, later on, when he issued his clarion call to the nation, during his sojourn in West and after, through his fiery epistles and luminous lectures collected later as *Letters of Vivekananda* and *Lectures from Colombo to Almora.*

8. *Nation-building through Man-Making*

His central message in all these was man-making and nation-building, nation-building through man-making. How to make men and women stand on their own feet and extend the hand of fellowship to others. On this subject, he has many things to say to our people today. Many of our people do not know what should be the goal and meaning of the education that we are imparting to our children and youth; how to orient it to human development of a seventh of the human race. For want of time, I shall touch only briefly on this luminous Vedāntic theme of the inherent divinity of man and his organic capacity to realise this truth, this profound vision of the sages of India of something infinite and immortal pulsing in every human soul, and the technique of its steady manifestation in life and work. How can we help our people to unfold that luminous infinite dimension, that inherent divine glory—that is how Vivekananda defined the scope and purpose of education and religion in his lectures and letters.

9. *Education as Human Unfoldment*

It is in this context, and to this end, that Swamiji has given us certain directions and guidelines to make our education truly Indian, and truly oriented to full human development. I refer to one beautiful idea he has given: Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.

If so it cannot consist in merely institutional education: it is not compressed within the four walls of a school or college or university.

True education is to continue throughout one's life. It then becomes education for human unfoldment. **Sri** Ramakrishna himself had said: As long as I live, so long do I learn.

Swamiji deals with education from that point of view. He has some profound ideas to give us, which are echoed today in the luminous ideas on evolution given by twentieth-century biology. He advocated education as a means to manifest the perfection already within every man, woman, and child; for such an education, *the secular and the spiritual form but the earlier and the later phases of a single and continuous process of unfoldment.*

10. *Human Unfoldment: Its First Stage*

The first step to educate a human being, he said, is to give a sense of individuality, and the freedom that accompanies it, to that man or woman or child. This is a great idea, a beautiful idea, for us in India. We are today about 650 million; but that is only quantity, the strength of number; there is not the corresponding strength that comes from quality, from men and women developing a sense of individual worth, and dignity, and freedom, and self-confidence or *ātama-śraddhā*. We did not concern ourselves with it in our policy and programme of education these few centuries. We treated our millions as an amorphous mass. Animals are treated as submerged in the mass. Men and women are not meant to be treated as submerged in the mass, submerged in the collectivity. But our society treated them as such. And Swamiji summoned our nation to restore to our people their inherent individual worth and dignity. Nature has given man a beautiful organic system with a cerebral apparatus within, by which man achieves great heights of freedom, development, and fulfilment.

What do we mean when we speak of installing man on the throne of his or her inherent dignity and worth? To this question, Swamiji gives a great answer, namely, human unfoldment through education, what is called today *secular education*, consisting of physical exercises, games, the physical sciences, the arts, economics, and politics, etc. Education in these subjects trains and expands the mind and helps one to get a grip on his or her environment. We see today the inspiring spectacle of millions of our people living in our villages, who were, through illiteracy and ignorance, experiencing a sense of helplessness with respect to their natural and social environments, absolutely submerged in the crowd for centuries, now experiencing the slow unfolding of this strength of individuality after they enter a primary school and beginning to feel the impact of knowledge, even in its rudimentary forms. We see him or her slowly becoming a man among men, a woman among women, with a measure of faith in oneself, and becoming aware of an individual identity and dignity. Writes Vivekananda in one of his letters from U.S.A. (*Complete Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 307; 1959 Edition):

> 'Educate and raise the masses, and thus alone a nation is possible. ... The whole defect is here: The real nation who live in cottages have forgotten their manhood, their individuality. Trodden under the foot of the Hindu, Mussalman, or Christian, they have come to think that they are born to be trodden under the foot of everybody who has money enough in his pocket. They are to be given back their lost individuality. They are to be educated. ... Our duty is to put the chemicals together; the crystallisation will come through God's laws. Let us put ideas into their heads, and they will do the rest. Now this means educating the masses.

Therefore, the first stage of human education, or education for human development, according to Vivekananda, is restoring the status of individuality to the child, *and the freedom accompanying that sense of individuality*. Freedom cannot come without this sense of individual identity. The child within the mother's womb has no identity; it has no sense of freedom; it is just a part of its mother's body. Animals have no sense of freedom because they have no individual identity. Only in the case of man do we find the possibility of this unque development; this is because there is a unique focus within him or her. What is that focus? It is the ego centred in the organism's experience of self-awareness; it is the unique initial focus of the beauty, and the strength, and the glory, of man. In the wake of the development of this unique focus in man, there appeared also other significant powers in him or her, like memory, reason, will, and the capacity for speech communication. We had not understood till now the wide significance of this datum of self-awareness, this Vedāntic truth of self-knowledge or *ātmajṇāna*, except in its higher spiritual levels. Modern neurology helps us to understand its wider significance in the life of man—from childhood to sainthood— and to appreciate the loftiness of the philosophy of *ātma-jṇāna* of our ancient Vedānta.

Animals have no such self-knowledge, they have only knowledge of the not-self; even the human baby, at birth, has no self-awareness or self knowledge; it is only at the age of about 2 or 2½, that the human child develops this new focus of awareness known as self-knowledge and the sense of the ego. And the education of the human child starts with the strengthening of this ego, the strengthening of this focus of individuality and the sense of freedom it involves.

This is the first education of the child. All the children of India today, when they go to school and acquire secular education, slowly develop this strength and this freedom of individuality. We must extend this blessing to every child in our country. Every one becoming an individual, instead of continuing to remain submerged in the group or the crowd or the caste. Is this development of strength and freedom of individuality the whole of education? Yes, says contemporary Western thought; No, says Vedānta, its *adhyātma-vidyā,* its philosophy of man in depth, her philosophy its human possibilities; and no, says also the higher dimensions of twentieth-century biology.

11. *Human Unfoldment: Its Second Stage*

Following India's *adhyātma-vidyā,* Swamiji goes much deeper, and gives a second dimension to education, to be followed by other higher dimensions. He says that, having educated man as an *individual,* and given him a sense of freedom, we have to take that education one step further; education has to make the individual *grow* into a *person.* From the *freedom of individuality* he must grow into the *freedom and responsibility* of *personality.* What is the nature of that growth? It is this question, and the answer to it, that makes Vivekananda's and Vedānta's contribution to education unique. That growth is entirely spiritual. It is education for *Learning to Be,* and not merely for *learning to do,* in the words of the Unesco report on education. That is not a physical growth. Physical growth we have from childhood onwards. It is not mere intellectual growth either; we have it through secular education. But there is another growth, namely, spiritual, by which we are able to go beyond the organic limitation of our ego and expand ourselves in love and sympathy and service to inter-act with millions of people in society.

This spiritual growth from individuality to personality is never achieved by mere intellectual growth; it is a growth beyond the intellectual dimension; it is a growth from which issue, as a by-product, moral values, aesthetic sense, ethical awareness with its concern for other individuals, a spirit of service and dedication, and a capacity for team work. The late scientist Julian Huxley's definition of person and personality is illuminating in this context: persons are individuals who transcend their organic individuality in conscious (social) participation. When you *participate* in the life of other individuals in society, you cease to be a mere organically limited individual centred in the ego. You become a *person,* warm, genial, and endowed with the capacity for communication with others. It is *persons* of this type that our country must have in abundance, if we are to strengthen and mature our infant democracy established for the first time during the long 5,000-year history of our nation, and to realize our dream and hope of establishing a non-violent progressive social order in India; we have now to stress this second vital step in education, in order to transform our *largest* democracy into the *greatest* democracy.

12. *These Two-fold Unfoldments as the early Stages of Ātma-vikāsa*

This spiritual growth of man is known as *ātma-vikāsa* in our own Sanskrit and other Indian languages. What is the *vikāsa* to take place in you and me? Physical *vikāsa?* This is ensured through the science of nutrition and physical exercise and games. Mental *vikāsa?* This is achieved by secular education through its training of the mind and the aquisition of knowledge and skills. These two constitute, says Vedānta, the important two phases of the first unfoldment of *ātma-vikāsa*. The third phase of this *vikāsa* constitutes the second unfoldment which comes to you when you begin to grow spiritually. This dimension of *ātma-vikāsa* is unique and extremely significant in the case of man, as it makes him grow spiritually, unlike all other species, beyond his organism, and his organically limited ego, into his true Self, which is spiritually one with other selves in society. It is through renunciation and service, *tyāga* and *seva,* that this unique growth is accomplished—renunciation of the limited ego and manifestation of the infinite self, through moods and acts of love and service. Swami Vivekananda has described this as the true life o man in one single sentence in his *Letters:* They alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive. This is human growth *from the freedom of individuality into the freedom and responsibility and the socially oriented will of personality.* He has also said: *Renunciation* and *service* are the twin ideals of India; intensify her in those channels, the rest will take care of itself.

These three dimensions of growth, in its two unfoldment phases, must be ensured in every child through education. A sense of social responsibility is the index of psychic maturity; a socially oriented will is the central focus of character; and character is the contribution of the third dimension of *ātma-vikāsa.* Our country is in urgent need of that third dimension of growth in our people, so that ethical and moral values may integrate man with man in our democratic society. As an individual, I experience a sense of freedom, and of dignity; that is fine; but that freedom is a dangerous thing unless it takes into account,and respects and adjusts itself to, the freedom and dignity of other individuals in society.

13. *Growth of Individuality into Personality*

This is the capacity for inter-human communication, for digging affections into each other, for working with others in a spirit of mutuality and team spirit, for common good and for self-development. As the late Bertrand Russell has said: One who has achieved only the strength of individuality is like a billiard ball; his only relation with other human beings in society is collision. Billiard balls know only how to co-exist or collide with each other; they do not know how to enter into each other. But human beings have to communicate with each other, enter into each other, dig affections into each other. That cannot come merely at the level of individuality. It comes only, and that as a significant by-product, when that individuality grows and expands into personality. It is this dimension of spiritual growth that makes man develop the capacity to integrate oneself with others in society, to live at peace with them, and to express oneself in joyous moods and acts of love and service. This is an inward growth, an intangible growth; it is an inward journey, if journey it can be called, towards the infinite centre of man and the universe within each and everyone of us.

We wrongly associate religion exclusively with some ritual or ceremony or set of do's and dont's. But that is not *the science of religion* but *only an ethnic piety,* according to Swami Vivekananda. Religion, according to him, is the science of man's spiritual growth and fulfilment, the manifestation of the divinity already in man. Whatever we do in the field of religion, must, therefore, answer one important question, namely, have we achieved spiritual growth thereby? We bathe in the Gaṅgā and other sacred rivers, we worship in church and mosque, and temple, we meditate, we pray, we read holy books; on returning home, we have to ask this question to ourselves: Have we advanced one step in our God-ward journey? Have we grown spiritually? This is how religion functions as a science. This is how we make our life itself, and more especially, our properly tuned mind, into a mighty laboratory of the science of religion. We plant a tree; it has then two leaves. After five years of agricultural care, if we find that it has still only two leaves, we conclude, according to agricultural science, that all the manure and water given to it have gone to waste. Similarly, in the field of the science of religion.

In the field of human life, we take care to see that the food and drink a baby takes makes it grow physically in weight and strength. To all such physical growth, there is a limit, there has to be a limit. Nobody wants oneself or one's child to grow beyond a body weight of 150 or 200 pounds. It is harmful to grow beyond that. Even the brain cannot be stuffed too much in the name of education; but education must help to train the mind to scout for facts, to acquire knowledge. But the inclination to use the knowledge so acquired to enhance life creatively, and the capacity to give healthy direction to psychic energies, individual and collective, is the product solely of man's spiritual growth, over and above his or her physical and mental growth. This is a science in itself, a technology in itself, and when you understand and apply this science and technique, which the *Gītā* calls by the simple word *yoga,* you develop a new quality, impart a new value system, to your life. In its early manifestations, it expresses itself as the *humanistic impulse;* it expresses itself as the sense of human responsibility, a responsiveness to the human situation around you, because of the self-transcendence you have achieved, the self-expansion you have acquired.

All irresponsible behaviour proceeds from individuals failing to grow into persons. Freedom and strength of will, coupled with responsibility, is man-making, according to Swami Vivekananda. None can be called a citizen of a free society without this sense of social responsibility; and education in a free society is education for citizenship; and education for citizenship is this education for man-making. What we lack in India today in a big way is this sense of social responsibility. We are becoming *individuals* through our secular education; we experience its sense of freedom and we want to express that freedom. But we misbehave in diverse ways while doing so, only because we have not refined and enriched that sense of freedom by adding to it the second important constituent which alone constitutes psychic maturity, namely, a sense of social responsibility, and developing, thereby, into *persons*. Even children from about three years of age onwards, can have this sense of responsibility instilled into them in assimilable doses.

We know how a child behaves when it is not properly trained in this way. For example, when its mother wants to go out on a visit, such a child weeps and wails and tears the hair, to say that mother should not go out, she should be with it all the time. There is nothing wrong if children up to about three years behave like this; but after three and four and five, such behaviour should not be encouraged in children. They must be slowly educated to realize that mother has a life of her own and that they should not stand in the way to deprive their mother of her freedom. That is responsible behaviour; and it must be induced slowly and steadily. When the child begins to feel and to say: 'Yes, mother, you must go, I shall manage myself, you have your own world of life and work and joy', you witness the onset of a sense of human responsibility, of the growth into personality. By the time the child reaches the age of about eight, this responsiveness to the limited family human situation will become a permanent trait; and we can watch individuality steadily growing into personality within him or her, manifesting the values of love and concern, service and dedication. From then onwards, the child learns to extend this human responsiveness from the family to society outside. In all these attitudes and behaviour, where the 'I' in the child slowly becomes the 'I and you and the we', you witness the moral and ethical growth of the child.

14. *Sri Ramakrishna on Kācā āmi Growing into Pākā āmi*

Sri Ramakrishna expresses it through a beautiful parable: A father had two children. He bought two mangoes from the market and gave each one a mango. The elder child took the mango, went into his room, closed the door, ate it and, wiping his mouth, came out. The second child took the mango and found it very fine; he remembered his comrades, ran to them in the courtyard, and shared with them the joy of eating it. Between the two, you can see two types of ego behind their behaviour. In the first, there is no spiritual growth. Sri Ramakrishna calls it the *kācā āmi* or the *unripe* ego. In the second, there is spiritual growth, there is a person and not a mere individual. Sri Ramakrishna calls it the *pākā āmi,* the *ripe* ego. There are thousands of occasions in life where we can express this ripe ego, where we can see this kind of spiritual growth mainfested, where man erects an expansive personality above his or her rigid individuality; in the language of the English poet, Wordsworth:

'Unless above himself he erects himself,
    How poor a thing is man!'

When a man or woman grows intellectually without a corresponding spiritual growth, or without the growth of heart, he or she becomes a rascal. He or she is full of individual ambition, which he or she pursues with one's sharpened brain, but with no ideal of human excellence to strive for or to live for; education has come, but culture has tarried behind; and that education, put in the service of the organically conditioned ego, has transformed intelligence into cleverness, or *cālāki,* as we say in Hindi. Vivekananda said that no great work can be achieved by *cālāki;* he, therefore, did not want our country to be converted into a nation of *cālāks.* If the educated are only such ambitious *cālāks,* they will encompass the ruin of each other, and of the nation as well.

In the language of Bertrand Russell, our knowledge must rise to the level of wisdom (*Impact of Science on Society,* p. 120-21):

> 'Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow'

Education and knowledge, infused with the humanistic impulse, become powerful forces for social development and human fulfilment. Swamiji wanted in India hundreds of young men and women endowed with that spiritual growth, where freedom of indiviudality has been wedded to the freedom and responsibility of personality, where human energies have been turned towards the devlopment and welfare of man all around them. (*The Complete Works,* Vol.V, p. 15; 7th Edition):

> 'A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor, and the fallen, and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social rising up—the gospel of equality'.

Our country has been absolutely down and out for some centuries, due to which it presents a picture of arrested human development. Centuries-long policy of 'each man unto himself and the devil take the hind-most', tempted the devil to come and dance wild, darkening our nation for centuries. And we missed the healthy and invigorating dance of the humanistic impulse all the time.

15. *Science and Humanism*

Swami Vivekananda presented to our nation this humanistic impulse as one of the great fruits of our ancient and continuing Vedāntic tradition and of the modern Western tradition. Physical sciences, or tested human knowledge in the field of external nature, on the one hand, and humanism, on the other, are the two great positive energies of the culture of the West today, and these form the fundamental energies of our national tradition as well. Unfortunately, we failed to express these adequately in our national life during the past few centuries. Today, we have the opportunity to permeate our nation with these energies, blending them with the twin energies of the modern Western tradition. By the widest diffusion of secular education, the nation will restore to our men and women dignity and worth; then, by setting him or her on the long road of his or her psycho-social evolution or spiritual growth, we shall help to expand them into that compassion and concern for fellow beings, which will express itself in moods and acts of service. Fortunately, today, in the biological sciences, there is *this new formulation* of the concept of evolution at the human stage *as psycho-social evolution,* that comes close to our Vedāntic idea of spiritual growth.

16. *Humanism and Psycho-Social Evolution*

Man alone has the capacity to develop and expand from the limitations of his organic system and enter into, and be entered into by, millions of others in society. Man has been provided by nature with a versatile organ, namely, the higher brain. Physical survival, organic satisfactions, and numerical increase constituted the goals of organic evolution at the pre-human phase; in man, these have been largely relegated to the care of his lower brain, releasing his higher brain for striving for, and achieving, freedom and other higher purposes transcending the cravings of his organic system. Struggling to develop new organs for achieving organic survival has no meaning for a species so high in the evolutionary level as man, who can invent any such organs he needs for his survival by the use of his brain, better than what nature can do for him with her slow and wasteful evolutionary processes. Hence the stress in twentieth-century biology on evolution rising, at the human stage, to the psycho-social level, with *quality* as its criterion in place of *quantity*, and *fulfilment* as its goal in place of *mere organic satisfactions*.

Our educational endeavour must be to put every child on the long road of his or her psycho-social evolution, an evolution that generates the humanistic impulse as its by-product. That can take place only by first giving him or her a sense of individual worth and dignity. Swami Vivekananda had said that our common people had been oppressed and exploited by kings, by priests, by feudal lords, and by intellectuals, and that too for centuries. Today, all these have to wiped out; 'wipe off that blot', exhorted Swami Vivekananda in his remarkable lecture on Vedānta in Lahore in 1897. Everyone in our country must be made to feel as a man among men—be they industrial workers, agricultural labourers, peasants, tribal people, Harijans. Even a tiny child should be respected, and should not be suppressed, should not be bossed over, but only helped. Respect for man as man should become a constant attitude in all our inter-human relations. That is how you help to bring out the best out of every individual. *When we educate him or her to develop these two values, namely, freedom and responsibility, and express them in all human interactions, we have real man-making education.*

17. *Physical Maturity and Psychic Immaturity*

We are implementing the diffusion of the first to an ever increasing extent today, but the second is coming rather too slowly; it must be accelerated. All the problems of India today arise from the insufficiency of that second value. We are a people with a very low level of the sense of social responsibility and human concern. Public spirit is largely lacking in our people as a whole. In other countries, it is generally a pervasive value among the people. We have to educate the whole nation in this direction. In his Madras lecture on *The Future of India,* in 1897, Swami Vivekananda had referred to this lack of human concern in our nation and to the need to make man the centre of our concern and action (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, page 300-01; 1960 Edition):

> 'For the next fifty years, this alone shall be our keynote—this, our great Mother India. Let all other vain gods disappear for the time from our minds. This is the only god that is awake, our own race, everywhere his hands, everywhere his feet, everywhere his ears, he covers everything. All other gods are sleeping. What vain gods shall we go after and yet cannot worship the god that we see all round us, the *Virāt?* ... The first of all worship is the worship of the *Virāt*—of those all around us. *Worship it.* Worship is the exact equivalent of the Sanskrit word, and no other English word will do. These are all our gods—men and animals; and the first gods we have to worship are our countrymen. These we have to worship, instead of being jealous of each other and fighting each other. It is the most terrible *karma* for which we are suffering, and yet it does not open our eyes!'

If you see a human being endowed with plenty of energy, plenty of the sense of individuality with its hopes and ambitions and sense of freedom, but without the sense of social responsibility, what will you call him? In psychology, we say that he is physically mature, but psychically immature. Irresponsibility is a sign of mental immaturity. If one is psychically mature, one will certainly respond to the human situation around. The sign of this psychic immaturity, and its fruit, irresponsibility, is all around us in our country, as much in the violent agitations and the social malpractices by many of our people, as in the unconcern of many employees of our state and Union Governments to the real grievences and the human welfare of the common people. When that sense of responsibility comes to a human being, his or her stature goes up. Swamiji, in his Madras lecture on *My plan of Campaign,* referred to this psychic immaturity in many of our people in the arresting phrase of *moustached babies!* (*Complete Works*, Vol.III, p.218; 8th Edition).

That is a wonderful term, mentally a child, though physically a man. The child in the house, when angry, breaks cups and saucers; he exercises his freedom thereby; but the responsibility to replace the broken ones is not mine, but of my parents, thinks the child. So also the child-minds in India today feel and act: We are free to break and destroy our hard-earned public property; but the responsibility to replace them is the business of the government or of the institution concerned, not mine; mine is only to destroy. Here you see the relevance of that arresting phrase used by Vivekananda—*moustached babies.* Now, education must help moustached babies to grow and mature into moustached men. It is only then that men become truly men; the idea, though not the phrase, applies equally to our women also. By simply becoming 21 years old after standing in a queue from birth, a man or woman doesn't become a citizen, in the full sense of the word, with the entitlement to vote in elections; age should be one criterion only; and this does not stand in need of education; but psychic maturity, that endows one with a sense of social responsibility and human concern, should be considered the second more important criterion; and this is the contribution of education alone. To all our children in education, we must convey this great message of growth. Have you grown? After having gone to school and college and got the degree, ask yourself, have you grown? Have you matured into a responsible citizen? Do you experience a sense of national responsibility? The millions of people around you need your help and service; and you also need, for your own human growth, the social context provided by them. Have you captured the responsiveness to the human situation around you?

18. *Conclusion*

That is how we should measure the implementation of Swamiji's most relevant message of man-making education. The absence of the inculcation of a sense of national responsibility in our educational process is evident also in the fact that the aim of most of our youth in education in India today is just a job, or a more lucrative job in West Asia or America or Canada, though some of them may fail in achieving that latter aim. Most of them have no concern for the lot of the three hundred million poor and undeveloped fellow citizens around them. Though it is true that, among those who have thus gone abroad, there are a few who have undoubtedly achieved high distinction in their fields of work.

This is the situation in our education today—an unpatriotic attitude, an absence of the spirit of service and dedication; this, even among those who fail to go abroad but stay on and work in India. If the growth of individuality into personality had taken place in such people, they would have said to themselves: I have taken so much from my nation for my education; my nation has millions who have not received this blessing; should I not give back something to my nation? What a beautiful, hope-inspiring, mature attitude it is! So Swamiji says that we are creating a new type of *traitors* through our education and not patriots and citizens. It is a new definition of *treason* that he has given in a remarkable sentence in one of his letters from America to his Indian disciples. I saw the appeal of that sentence and its sentiment to people in some of the developing countries like Zambia, when I referred to it during my lectures and news-media interviews (*Complete Works* Vol. V, p. 58; 1959 Edition):

> 'So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.'

How much money is spent by the nation on my education! And how little of it is accounted for by the fees I pay! And, after all that education, I forget my nation, I neglect my people. What can be a more harmful *treason* than this? asked Vivekananda, especially in a developing nation. What a tragedy for an India that is struggling for human development for a seventh of the human race! This tragedy can be ended by instilling, into the minds of our young teachers and students alike, the inspiring message of man-making and nation-building given by Swami Vivekananda, and also a second message of his, couched in these pregnant words: *Be and Make;* that shall be our motto. Be men yourselves and help others to be men.

Thank you.

14

EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT*

1. *Introduction*

I am very grateful to Vice-Chancellor Shri Rajkhowa for inviting me to address this Convocation of the Gauhati University. I have just come back after a long 8-months lecture tour of Austrialia, Fiji, U. S. A., Canada, Mexico, Holland, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Italy and Greece, during which I had occasion to address several universities and colleges in these countries. Today, I am glad to be in this University of Gauhati before this distinguished assembly of the galaxy of the educational world of our north-east state of Assam, to be stimulated from your association, and to stimulate you in turn if I can.

2. *Why I Am With You Today?*

I wish, first of all, to congratulate those students who have just now received their degrees and diplomas. I hope that the knowledge you have so far gained will help you to pursue knowledge throughout the rest of your life and to make that knowledge flower into character and practical efficiency. You have my best wishes.

I wish to utilise this occasion of a convocation address to share with you some of my thoughts on the most pressing problems of our nation today. I have just now come from my visit to our neighbouring states of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland; I have also visited some other parts of India recently. I have felt all over India a sense of urgency, a sense of great expectation, as the prevailing mood of our people. And it is in the context of this urgency and this expectation that I view my present occupation with you as a think-together process on the subject of *Education and Human Development*.

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*Convocation Address at the Gauhati University, Gauhati, Assam, on 28 March 1972

We have just passed through a great period of revolutionary change during the past one year in the context of our involvement in the liberation struggle of Bangladesh. We have achieved through it a large measure of strength for our philosophy and programme of human growth and development in our subcontinent, and also a measure of national self-respect and true national freedom. Today we have to ask only one question after these 25 years of political freedom during which we have passed through so many ups and downs: *From now on where do we go from here? What is the type of human development we seek in our country?*

3. *Energy in Our Modern Youths: a Unique National Asset*

Students who have received their degrees today will be entering into a world, as much of struggle as of opportunity. Our country is not an easy place to live in today. We are faced with many problems; our road is strewn with many rocks of difficulties. But we have one asset in our younger generation, and that asset is something unique. In our age-old history, we had, generally, young people who could be easily managed, who were docile, who could be safely controlled and directed by elders. But today we have in India a new type of youth, which has plenty of vitality, plenty of energy, plenty of self-confidence, far different from the old docile manageable type. But in spite of our political independence, the nation has not found ways and means to give creative and positive direction to this enormous energy and vitality in our youths. I have seen several of our older people getting frightened by this tremendous energy resources in our younger generation. But it is in this field that we need to capture and radiate a new wave of confidence and satisfaction, a new wave of hope, which are specially needed in our education.

In this state of Assam, we have the mighty Brahmaputra, a very tumultuous river, throwing so many challenges and problems at us while conferring some blessings as well. Our nation today is committed to taming this mighty river for the good of the people who live in this part of our country, including now the people of neighbouring Bangladesh also. We are trying to do the same in the case of the other rivers of our country as well. This is the process of river-taming through physical technology, by which their vast natural energy resources are sought to be trained into creative energies in the service of man, in the service of his growth, development, and fulfilment.

4. *Need to Discipline Our Human Resources*

But we need another type of discipline, another type of creative training and taming, for our nation today. And that concerns the enormous human energies of our nation and, especially, of its youths. In number, we are one-sixth of the human race. And so far as our youth is concerned, as I said earlier, we have enormous energies manifested in them, which we never had throughout our history. Instead of getting baffled, instead of getting frightened, by this mass of youthful energy, we must master that science and technology of man, by which we can tame, discipline, make creative, and channelize all this vast energy for individual and collective human betterment. *And that, according to me, is the meaning and function of education in a free society*—education that welcomes intelligence, that welcomes physical and mental vitality, education that disciplines, purifies, and transforms this enormous mental and physical energy into constructive and creative purposes. That is the type of education that India and the world at large needs urgently today. We all know, and we have to confess, that we do not have that kind of education yet. Neither is the rest of the world in possession of it yet.

Humanity is passing through an unprecedented transition. We in India also are passing through a revolutionary phase of our age-old history. Many of our old institutions and ideas, now getting outworn and obsolete, are breaking down and are being discarded. We are taking in many new things, some of which are wholesome, some not quite so, and some positively harmful. This is inevitable in a period of great changes when humanity learns creative adjustment through much trial and error. A nation makes such creative adjustment through less error and bungling only by resort to thinking, to much dispassionate thinking together. Our national problems today demand that we put our heads together and decide what is to the good of our nation. This can come about only when we engage ourselves in calm silent thinking. *The most valuable asset that we have to acquire today is this capacity for, and habit of, calm silent* *thinking and, particularly, thinking together in a team.* And this is the vital field of national life where the universities come into the picture.

5. *Higher Education: its purpose*

A university is meant to be an institution for acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and for fostering free and responsible thinking. By discharging this function, it releases forces for composing the distractions of the age and for taking humanity onward in its march to self-knowledge and self-expression.

That is the purpose of higher education in every free society. More of calm thinking, more of thinking together, more of purposeful thinking, more of *breaking wits* instead of the prevailing practice of *breaking heads*, is what we need in our universities today. Our problems are stupendous; they cannot be solved by shouting; they cannot be solved by mere passion; these only cloud the issues and make the problems more intractable. Our great culture is the product of calm silent thought; modern Western culture, dynamic and pervasive, is similarly the product of calm silent thought. Today, this university, as well as our other universities, must become the medium for channelizing into human life in India these two mighty forms of energy, the energy of our own ancient culture and the energy of the modern Western culture. Our universities have to become the clearing house of ideas and the dynamos of inspiration, and this can become possible only when our youths enter the university *as students in search of knowledge,* in search of the best that the world has left for each new generation, and the teachers function in the universities as *proud lovers of that knowledge,* who not only use and enjoy it themselves, but also enhance it with their own intellectual contributions and by their sharing of it with the new generation. *This corporation of knowledge, this community of mentally alive students and teachers, constitutes the university and provides for human development an educational dynamo.*

6. *Education as Human Development*

Our nation stands in urgent need of the service of such educational dynamos today. Unfortunately, our educational institutions are far far away from this great ideal. But, if we are patriots, if we love our freedom, if we love our culture, we can do nothing better than to yoke all our energies in the direction of making our education oriented to this great ideal. It is not the work of one person, but of teams of thinking men and women. For this we need to learn to think, to love to think together. *We need to learn to accept dissent, and to dissent in the most constructive manner.* That is what nourishes democracy and what gets nourished by democracy in turn. That is the meaning of true freedom. We have lived in slavery for centuries together. We have suffered much privation, physical and mental, from our slavery, which meant not only loss of freedom by the nation but also the blasting of the individuality of the people. Swami Vivekananda therefore said that nation-building in India must also involve *giving back to the people their lost individuality.* National freedom must mean every child in our country developing his or her individuality, his or her personality, from out of the prevailing state of being *an anonymous face in the mass,* a submerged item in the collectivity. *Education is the process by which man, submerged in the collectivity, is raised to the dignity and status of, first, an individual, then, a person, with the capacity to integrate oneself freely with other persons.*

7. *Democracy in Modern India*

This is man-making education, which is the only basis for nation-building. One of the most meaningful sets of terms coined by Swami Vivekananda for the education and politics of our country is this *man-making* and *nation-building,* nation-building through man-making. We have been engaged in the process of nation-building ever since we entered the modern period. It is not that we were not a nation before. We have had profound and powerful integrating forces, spiritual and cultural, which have united us into a nation since a few thousand years. But we did not translate these forces into political terms, into political achievements, on the basis of a pervasive political awareness in our people. We had never tried to develop the political personality of our vast population and to establish a political nationality on the basis of the strength of that personality. The various states we established were based on, and derived their strength from, a king, or an emperor, or a commander-in-chief, throughout the ages, but never on, and from, our people, who were always just *subjects*, often exploited and neglected.

Today, for the first time, we have the opportunity to build a stable political state, a progressive socio-political order, in our country, through the political education of the nation, through the diffusion of political awareness and political power among the millions and millions of our people. Our achievements of the past 25 years provide a firm foundation for such a development. We have established a free, democratic, republican state on the strength of a noble and progressive Constitution provided with built-in provisions for later amendments in response to changing social needs. And we have based it on 'We, the People of India' for the first time in our long history. We have performed the impossible feat of holding several general elections covering the largest democratic electorate in the world, over 210 million voters, most of whom, being illiterate, were supposed to be incapable of exercising their political franchise. But we have disproved such assessments and dismal predictions made by critics, hostile and friendly, and demonstrated to ourselves and to the world at large the maturity of our people in facing the challenges of a democratic political order.

In several lectures in the United States, I had occasion to point out that India has successfully faced the challenge of democratic elections, not once but five times since her independence, and that the number of people going to the polls in India is more than the total population of the United States. That is the image that our country presents today to the rest of the world that, on the strength of its age-old cultural heritage, with its spirit of tolerance and comprehension, its people can assimilate modern democratic ideas and processes, they can accept dissent, they can respect political opposition, and that they can work together for the good of the nation. A few ups and downs we have faced during the last 25 years but, by and large, the nation has steadily forged ahead, and has a record of achievements in diverse fields to its credit.

8. *Evolution of the Indian Nationality*

Let every citizen of India, let our youths particularly, be proud of these solid achievements. Let them strengthen themselves with the awareness that the nation has translated its cultural and spiritual vision of unity in diversity into a socio-political experiment covering a sixth of the human race. From ancient times, we had this vision of India's national unity, geographical, cultural, and spiritual. One of the oft-quoted verses of one of our great Puranas, ***The Viṣṇu Purāṇa,*** of about the second or first century B.C., brings to us this vision of India's national unity from **Kanyakumāri** in the far south to the Himalayas in the far north **(II.3.I)**:

> *Uttaraṁ yat samudrasya himadreh yaśca daksinam;*
> *varsam tat bhāratam nāma bharati yatra saṁtatih—*

'What lies to the north of the oceans and to the south of the Himalayas, that continent is called *Bharata,* or India, and the children, i.e., citizens, therein are known as *Bharati,* or Indians.'

That is a great national vision; and today, for the first time, that national vision finds firm expression in the evolution of a strong political nationality, democratic and egalitarian, comprehensive of our diverse castes, creeds, races, and linguistic groups.

Our whole education and politics need to be geared to the furthering of our democratic evolution, to the strengthening of our political unity and national solidarity. Whether we are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, or of any other religion, and whatever be the racial, social, or other differences in our historical backgrounds, all these become underwritten and softened by the awareness of our democratic national unity, of our citizenship of free India. It is that awareness that we have to develop and deepen today in all our people. Due to the lack of this political unity, we have, all through our history, suffered again and again as a people. We have suffered national humiliations for centuries. Today, for the first time, we have established a strong political state deriving its strength from the willing allegiance of our people. Sovereignty, which was till now centred in a king or an emperor, native or foreign, is today diffused in the 550 millions of our people. As citizens of a democratic republic, we are all sovereigns and subjects in one. As sovereign, we legislate for the nation and, as subject, we obey that law which we have helped to legislate. That is the privilege deriving from our citizenship of free India.

9. *Freedom and Responsibility*

I often feel that, if we have failed in any department of national activity during the last 25 years, we can trace its reason to this single fact that many of us have not understood the significance, have not felt this sense of privilege, have not assimilated the value, of our citizenship of free India. Two great values are predominant in such citizenship, namely, freedom and responsibility. Freedom immediately raises the stature of individuals. 25 years ago we were not free citizens. If you had gone abroad 25 years ago, you would have been required to describe yourself in your passport or visa papers, not as a *citizen* of India, but as a *subject* of the British Empire. We were subjects of a foreign state then, we were its children or wards. But since 1947, and more especially since January 26, 1950, as soon as we became citizens of our free state, our international stature became raised. The world respects each of you today as a person, as one with a nationality of your own. Let us never forget or underrate this value of political freedom. We have often done this before and indulged in internecine political and social conflicts and paid the heavy price of long political slavery and social stagnation.

This dark legacy, unfortunately still with us, can as well destroy our new freedom, if that *freedom* is not fortified with a second value, namely, *responsibility*. We have to realize that true freedom cannot come to any one as a gift. Every one has to earn it, fit himself or herself for it. External political freedom can be imperilled when not fortified by the inner freedom of the spirit. *There can be unfree men in a free political state, as there can be free men in an unfree political state.* Vivekananda and Gandhi and Tagore were free men in an unfree India. We have, alas, many unfree minds in our free India today! That is because many of us have taken freedom for granted; *we have not grown into it.* As soon as a baby is born, he or she is in a queue. When he or she becomes 21, he or she automatically becomes a citizen. Very soon we may be bringing the waiting age down to 18 years. This tying up of citizenship with only physical maturity, and freedom with only external political freedom is capable of destroying both the citizenship and the freedom gained.

Freedom needs to be nourished by that second constituent, namely, responsibility, to make it dynamic and worthwhile, to make it express the true spirit of citizenship. This is inner freedom of the spirit. *Freedom and responsibility constitute citizenship, and not freedom alone.* When the British ruled here, you and I were not responsible for what happened here. It was the Secretary of State in England and the British Viceroy here who were responsible. We were mere wards. But as soon as we became free, as soon as we established in our country a free democratic state, a *gaṇatantra rāj*, the responsibility for the happiness and welfare of our people, for the success or failure of that democratic experiment, also descended upon each of us.

10. *Maturity: physical versus Mental*

Therefore, this value of responsibility needs to be imbibed by us. Physical maturity comes to man at about the age of 12 and full physical growth and mental maturity come to him or her some years later. It is reckoned till now as 21 for the political purpose of the franchise in various countries, including India. Today, there is a move to bring it down to 18, and the United States, I think, has accepted that lower age. We are also going in this direction in India. I shall be happy if the Government of India will accept the proposal now before it to lower the franchise privilege from 21 to 18 years, so that every 18-year-old person in our country will be reckoned as a politically mature person and will be able to participate in the political life of our country. There is a *possibility* of mental maturity today at the age of 18, but it is essential that that possibility is *activized* by the training in the sense of responsibility. That is the true sign and index of mental maturity. It is possible for one to be physically mature and grown up, while still remaining mentally immature.

This has been our misfortune in India for quite a long time. We have got plenty of physically grown people with us who, however, are still mentally immature and behave like children, behave without a sense of responsibility. This I have marked in every segment of our population. This is the dark legacy of our centuries of slavery. Political subjection is bad for a people, for it dwarfs their personality. But if it goes on for centuries together, it becomes extremely harmful, for it blasts their sense of human dignity and sense of responsibility. Such people ever tend to disown personal responsibility, to pass it on to somebody else. They have not the strength and courage and self-confidence to stand up and say: I have done it; and I take the responsibility, I take the consequences, on myself. This sense of responsibility, this index of intellectual and mental maturity, we did not have the opportunity to develop in our population during the past few centuries of subjection. Even today, when our nation has been independent for 25 years, only a small number of our people has developed this precious human quality and value.

11. *'Moustached Babies!'*

Swami Vivekananda is considered to be one of the greatest architects of modern India and one of the foremost architects of the bridge of understanding between India and the rest of the world. He was pained to see this mental immaturity of many of our people, our lack of the sense of responsibility, and our spirit of childish dependence. In the course of his famous lecture in Madras in 1897 on 'My Plan of Campaign,' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. III, Eighth Edition, pp. 218), he addressed such of our people as: 'Boys, *moustached babies!*' It is a psychologically significant phrase to describe all physically mature but mentally immature people everywhere. In all his lectures and discourses in India, Swami Vivekananda did everything possible to make us aware of these dark traits of the legacy of our long slavery, including the vice of jealousy and our incapacity for conjoint action, and to educate us into the manliness of character and practical efficiency and into the spirit of service. It is this mental maturity with its concomitent of the sense of personal responsibility that our education failed to develop in an adequate measure in our people in spite of the stimulus of 25 years of freedom. We had seen this noble trait in many of our British masters. They showed the capacity to take decisions and to take personal responsibility for the consequences; a British officer would not let his subordinate down, nor would he shove his own failures on some one else below him, when taken to task by his superiors.

That is the sign of mental maturity and an important element of character-strength. We have not sufficient number of such people in India today. The nation needs more and more of such mentally mature people. We are adepts in taking all credit for successes and in passing on failures to the shoulders of those below or around us.

When any group, including our students, starts an agitation, it invariably becomes violent and ends up in burning of public property and shooting by the police. And the groups concerned invariably pass on the responsibility for such violence and burnings to the ubiquitous but invisible *goondas!* And our political leaders just say amen and absolve the groups concerned of all responsibility! By burning a bus or two to protest against the inadequate bus services to and from a college, the students only add to their problem of transport, by having one bus less, but do not help to solve it, and demonstrate only the psychological truth that their energy—*rajas*—is under the control of blind *tamas,* and not under the control of itself or of a luminous *sattva.* What does this show except that we have not developed enough mental maturity ahead of our physical maturity, and also enough courage, to own up the consequences of our actions.

12. *Education: Training the Mind and Not Stuffing the Brain*

And this development is the vital contribution of education to society. Education is not reading a few books and getting a degree. It is not *stuffing the brain* but *training the mind.* The British biologist Sir Julian Huxley and I had a correspondence with each other in 1970, after he had read the first edition of my book: *The Message of the Upaniṣads.* He was deeply impressed by the Upaniṣads and conveyed his appreciation in a letter, in the course of which he also conveyed his critical comments, ten in all. Among these critical comments, there was one about Indian education (*The Message of the Upaniṣads,* Second Edition, p. 573):

> 'The Swami gives a splendid definition of what education ought to be, and sometimes is. But my visits to India showed me that the aim of a large number of Indian undergraduates was not to enjoy an education of this sort, but to pass examinations and obtain a degree, which was useful in getting jobs.'

To this, I replied in the course of my 40-page letter (*ibid.,* pp. 608-9):

> 'This is unfortunately too true. Current Indian education is basically a continuation of what the British introduced into India in the last century with its aim of turning out clerks. It has quantitatively expanded immensely but has gone down qualitatively. It has neither the virtues of the ancient Indian system nor of the modern British system, but the weaknesses of both. It turns out every year not men, but functionaries of society—so many lawyers, doctors, engineers, etc. etc. *But India is*

also silently engaged in significant experiments in education and there is much silent constructive thinking and discussion also on the subject. We may hope to feel the impact of all these on our education in the coming decades. The fact is, everything in India today is in the melting pot—education, politics, religion, society, etc. She is passing through the most revolutionary transition in her long history. Her modern thinkers and leaders, especially Vivekananda, had the fullest grasp of the scope and possibilities of this modern transition. None can predict the shape of things to come. But her great leaders have injected great ideas into the body-politic; and there is the atmosphere of freedom; and there is youthful energy and dynamism. *The combination of these factors has turned modern India into a vast anthropological laboratory covering a sixth of the human race.* And we can take comfort from what Vivekananda said: Put the chemicals together, crystalization will take place according to nature's laws.'

Can we take our nation to strength and greatness with an education centred merely in passing examinations and obtaining a degree which is needed in getting jobs? We do need the degree; we do need the job. But to consider that all education is only getting a degree and getting a job is utterly suicidal for any free society. And yet, we are enacting such suicides every year. But we have the rare opportunity today to orient our education to what Vivekananda calls *man-making and nation-building purposes* in the context of, what your Vice-Chancellor said in his address, the new national strength and self-confidence which the successful handling of the Bangladesh liberation crisis has given us, in which the nation has shown its political maturity and political strength. Our people can now find in our state an effective instrument for effecting socio-economic changes peacefully, through the democratic method of discussion and negotiation, instead of the sterile method of violence and the breaking of heads and the destruction of national property.

13. *Character: The Fruit of a Socially Oriented Will*

Today, we have in our youths the manifestation of high emotional energy. This is the essential *raw material* of all character. But it is only the raw material. It needs *processing* to produce character. This rich emotional energy, *disciplined and controlled by a socially oriented moral will,* and *directed to socially useful channels of action,* is character-efficiency, according to Vivekananda. Where that emotional energy resource is less, the resulting character will be of a lower order. Where that energy is more, the resulting character will also be of a higher order. Herein lies the significance of education for human growth and fulfilment, individual and collective.

That high educational possibility is before us all today. *Let our universities be the centres from which these energies will emerge and radiate throughout the nation.* To play this vital role, they need to convert themselves into dynamic and dedicated centres of constructive and creative thinking. Let us, students and teachers and managements in our educational institutions, learn to sit and discuss across the table, calmly and purposefully, the problems that affect and afflict our nation as well as our education. We shall thus release a new energy into the bloodstream and nervous system of our nation, and then witness joyfully its march, with steady steps, to all-round prosperity and progress.

14. *Needed: More Work and Less Talk*

Unfortunately, many of our collective activities today end up in heated and frenzied discussions, pointless and fruitless. After hours of talk at committee meetings, corporation meetings, and in other forums, we often find we have achieved nothing. I have heard from a Vice-Chancellor of one of our universities that, sometimes, there would be about 200 items in the agenda for a senate meeting and, after four hours of heated discussion, 198 items would still remain untouched. This is not business, this is not efficiency, this is not political sense, this is not educational wisdom. When most members are eager to hear their own talking, and the less facts and figures we have, and the less grasp of and concern for the national objectives, the more we talk and with greater frenzy and passion, we cannot expect anything better. We have to realize that talking and thinking, as well as talking and doing, are both always in a relation of inverse ratio to each other.

All such talking is self-cancelling sterile talk. This is the drag that our nation is experiencing in its diverse fields of endeavour; it explains why our education and industry and administration are not producing expected results, why our nation has not marched faster these 25 years. Today, when we celebrate the silver jubilee of our independence, we may sit back calmly a while and take stock of our achievements and failures, and energize ourselves with our national objectives and the opportunities and possibilities for their realization, inherent in the current propitious situation of national urgency and resolve.

15. *Significance of the Modern Age in Our History*

Millions of our people have been living as next-door neighbours to brutes for centuries, due to continued social oppression and neglect. Today, we have the rare opportunity to bring them up and restore to them their human dignity. This is how Swami Vivekananda viewed *the possibilities of the modern age* of our history. Let every student ponder over this: We have treated millions of our people as worse than animals for centuries together. We do not deserve to be called men until we *wipe off this blot* on our nation, in the poignant words of Swami Vivekananda. We have the rare opportunity to do so today, especially after our recent elections with its massive mandate to eradicate poverty, after our recent victory in the liberation struggle of the people of Bangladesh, where another 75 million people have joined us in our progressive policy of a non-communal nationalism, democracy, and socialism, and with the possibility of the rest of Pakistan also, feeling the impact of these events, changing from its erstwhile negative and sterile policy and programme to a new positive one.

We have to strike the iron while it is hot. Let this univeristy, and our other universities, from now on, orient Indian education to liberate and to augment our disciplined human energy resources. We are producing and releasing physical energy by disciplining the Brahmaputra and our other rivers and our other geological forces for the development of our nation. But the supreme energy we need to release and discipline and make creative today is the energy *that is asleep in the millions of our human beings*, and *that is awake but chaotic in our educated youths*. That is the supreme objective of education, social and institutional; that is also the first stage of man's spiritual growth and development. That is also the human relevance of the physical sciences and technology. And investment in education is investment in man—in his growth, development, and fulfilment. Thus *education, science, and religion have a common objective and relevance, namely, human development*. They need to flow together to fertilize the field of human life and produce that diverse wealth of human excellence which we all desire to see in our nation.

16. *Psycho-Social Evolution*

Modern biology, in its twentieth-century form, gives us a beautiful vision of human nature and human destiny, which brings physical science close to the science of religion as understood in Vedānta. That vision relates to the rising of evolution, at its human stage, from the physical and the organic to the *psychosocial* phase, **to the substitution of the criterion of *quality* in place of quantity, and** of the concept of *fulfilment,* in place of organic satisfactions, organic survival, and numerical increase, ruling at its pre-human stage. And education is directly concerned with raising the *quality* level of human life. What is the quality of men and women coming out of our educational institutions into the wide world of society? This is a question that we should ask ourselves and boldly set ourselves to find the answer. All over the world, this question is being asked, this effort at qualitative enrichment of man is being recognized, over and above that of quantity. In the words of Sir Julian Huxley (Lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision', *Evolution After Darwin,* Vol. III. Chicago University Press, p. 259):

> 'But, like population explosion, this consumption explosion cannot continue much longer; it is an inherently self-defeating process. Sooner, rather than later, we must get away from a system based on artificially increasing the number of human wants and set about constructing one aimed at the qualitative satisfaction of real human needs, spiritual and mental as well as material and physiological. This means abandoning the pernicious habit of evaluating every human project solely in terms of utility—by which the evaluators mean solely its material utility and especially its utility in making a profit for somebody.
>
> 'Once we truly believe (and true belief, however necessary, is rarely easy) that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for more human beings and fuller achievements by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or T V sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, not an end in itself.'

Earlier in the speech, stressing the significance of man in evolution and the importance of his cultural inheritance over his genetic inheritance, Julian Huxley said (*ibid.*, p. 251):

> 'Man's evolution is not biological but psychosocial. It operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction

and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by break-throughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization, of knowledge, ideas and beliefs—ideological, instead of physiological or biological organization.'

This wisdom of modern Western science is in tune with the mature and age-old philosophical and spiritual wisdom of our own country. The modern West needs the touch of this wisdom badly. And we in India will be wise if, along with our energetic efforts to initiate and advance our industrial production and severely limit our population quantity, we take equally energetic steps to ensure the qualitative enrichment of our people through education in ethical and spiritual values, so as to reap, along with knowledge and intelligence, the harvest also of a psychosocial evolution, namely, character and the spirit of dedication and service.

17. *Vivekananda's Warning About a New Type of Treason*

Unfortunately, we in India today are running after quantity only—whether in the highly desirable fields of agricultural and industrial production and educational enrolment, or in the not so desirable field of money-making. And we have the ever-present phenomenon of quantity with respect to our population which has become a real challenge to us. *The stress on quality must invade all these fields today.* Educational institutions should ask themselves whether they are turning out fine specimens of humanity, men and women who have taken their first steps in spiritual growth, in psychosocial evolution—free and responsible citizens—or more and more clever men and crooks. The nation needs more and more evolved men and women—dedicated scientists, patriots, and men and women of the professions. Writing over 70 years ago, in a letter from U.S.A., Swami Vivekananda referred to this quality criterion and the need for spiritual growth in our men and women in a powerful sentence (*The Complete Works,* Vol. V, Eighth Edition, p. 58):

> 'So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.'

What a poweful sentiment clothed in equally powerful language! Political treason we all understand; but it is not a common occurrence. But Swamiji speaks of another type of treason; and we witness this treason being committed in a big way by many among the educated section of our society. Education is a very costly process. It costs about 15,000 to 20,000 rupees to produce a graduate and about four times more to produce a medical, engineering, and other types of technical graduates. Towards this huge expenditure, the student pays only a fraction as fees; all the rest comes from the state, from tax-payers. Having got all this costly education, many of us in India neglect the people; we never care to use our education to serve the millions, to convey modern knowledge and ideas to them, to lend a helping hand to raise them up. We use the education selfishly, to amass wealth, to climb the social ladder, to fatten oneself.

Is that education? Is that social justice? Is that the enhancement of quality? We have to ask ourselves these questions today and arrest the turning out of such *traitors* to society by our education. A small creative minority of our educated people refuse to be such '*traitors*', and it is their intelligence, hard work, and patriotic dedication that have achieved whatever progress we see in India today. And if we again want to see our nation progress faster, we have to take energetic steps to see that our education turns out such youths, youths who have achieved a measure of spiritual growth, of quality, in ever-increasing numbers. *This truth must be burnt into the soul of our nation today,* and especially of our younger generation.

18. *Rajas Under the Control of Sattva*

I had spoken earlier about the vitality of our present-day youths, a vitality manifest even in our little children. There is in them a measure of fearlessness, dynamism, and self-confidence which we missed in all our earlier generations. One great quality which we missed, and still miss, in many of our elders, but which our children have today, is straightforwardness. What they feel, they express straight, what they think about you, they will tell you direct; they are not generally crooked or tortuous. These are great assets, which can serve as excellent raw material for our education to turn out a more evolved humanity than hitherto. Our education had not the benefit of this type of human material before—a fund of what Vedānta calls *rajas* energy. Swami Vivekananda would have welcomed this energy resource in our children, if he were with us today. This is revealed from a significant incident in his life. He was returning to India from America. A friend and a fellow passenger in the ship told him: 'Swamiji, your people in India are very moral.' Why do you say so?' asked the Swami. She replied, 'because there is so little crime in India; whereas in England and U.S.A., for example, there is so much crime.' Any patriot would have been flattered to get such a tribute for his people from a foreigner; but not Swami Vivekananda. He saw through our contemporary goodness and gentleness and discovered a tremendous weakness behind it. And so, in a sad tone, he replied: 'I wish it were otherwise! I wish there were a little more of crime in India. There is no strength in my people even to commit crime!'

He saw in our people *tamas,* inertia, masquerading as *sattva,* calmness. He saw that many of us were good, not by intelligent and free choice but by custom and authority. Such hot-house goodness and gentleness cease to be sterling virtues when tested by circumstances. But, today, if Swami Vivekananda were to come back to us, he would be very happy to see that his people, especially the youths, are not *tāmasic* any more; they can commit crimes. The youth of India can commit crimes. We can burn buses; we can do many such things. And he would be happy to note that we have risen from *tamas* to *rajas* and welcome it *as the essential raw material for all education,* for all man-making and nation-building. But *it is only the raw material; it is only the first step*. The next step is the transformation of that *rājasik* energy into *sāttvik* energy, disciplined, constructive, and creative. And Swamiji would accordingly whisper into the ears of every boy and girl of India today not to rest content with the acquisition of this youthful vitality and energy but to educate it into the disciplined energy of free and responsible citizenship, and thus increase the quantity, and raise the quality, of his or her nation's human energy resources, to match the ever-increasing quantity of her physical energy resources developed by her sciences, technology, and industry.

This is human efficiency yoked to character and social vision. This is education for man-making and nation-building, in the words of Swami Vivekananda. It is such an education that can take our nation to greatness and glory. *Our education must find ways and* *means to take our youth to that second stage of human growth.* This is not achieved by mere agitations and violent conflicts. It needs a co-operative and team-spirit approach and atmosphere within our educational institutions and a good deal of thinking together. By introducing a *short-term and short-view politics* into our education, we have till now made that youthful energy destructive and self-cancelling; this is *rajas* under the control of *tamas*. Once freed from this stifling thraldom to that type of politics, our education will come to itself and, helping to bring the nation's energy of *rajas* under the influence of the energy of saṭtva, will become the most silent and potent creative force for the growth and development of our people and of our infant democracy. It is time that we strive hard to reverse the current sterile ways so that, *instead of our short-view, day-to-day politics influencing our education, our education will influence our politics and endow much of it with the much-needed long view.*

19. *Appeal of Indian Wisdom to the American Youth*

Those who participate in the actual educational process, namely, our teachers and students, have shown their patriotism and dedication during the recent Bangladesh crisis We have seen how the whole nation rose to the challenge of the occasion then. The crisis and its successful solution have left our nation with a new self-confidence and a new-found idealism missing during our entire post-independence period. Our education must take note of this welcome change and benefit from it and benefit also the nation at large in turn.

I was, as I said, in the United States twice recently and I was impressed by the new wave of idealism influencing many of its youths. Apart from their strong protest against their country's involvement in the utterly senseless Vietnam war, which is mainly responsible for their state's current efforts at ending that war, there is a general reaction against the prevailing philosophy and pursuit of material affluence, and even against physical sciences and technology as the main stimulus behind that philosophy. During the last ten years, there has been increasing concern with the gallopping problems of environmental pollution resulting from that over-industrialization which is designed to stimulate man's organic cravings, to prod him on to earn more and more wealth, and to produce goods and services to satisfy the same. This tyrannical dominance of quantity at the cost of the quality of human life has generated a strong reaction against the prevailing technological tyranny and the soul-killing materialistic philosophy behind it. Since the end of the Second World War, the Western mind, particularly the American mind, is in search of a deeper philosophy of man and his destiny; and that search is leading it to the East, particularly to India and its Vedānta and Yoga. No visitor can fail to note, and be impressed by, this contemporary turning of the West to India for her philosophy and spiritual wisdom, which today tells the Western people to utilise the knowledge and wealth and power of their industrial civilization to enrich the quality of their inner lives.

This is having a great appeal to the American youth. I was struck by the fact that religion has become an important subject of study in American education today. Increasing numbers of students in many universities and colleges are opting for courses in religion, and less and less students are opting for science and technology courses. I have seen colleges in which, out of an enrolment of 600 students, 400 have taken religion. And in this subject, Hinduism and Buddhism occupy a very important place and are studied not just as academic subjects, but with a deep sense of spiritual interest and involvement. This is the mood in which they study the Vedāntic books—the Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. More students study these books, and also the subject of religion, in the United States, than in any other country, including our own India. Here is the emergence of the search for quality over quantity, of man over money, of spiritual growth over and above physical and mental growth. It is only this, they now realise, that will help man to communicate with man, to love and be loved. It is inspiring to see the girls and boys of rich parents dressing simply and banishing from their minds and behaviour the pride of being rich; for they are in search of another type of riches—the inner riches of an evolved personality.

20. *Psycho-social Evolution as Spiritual Growth*

This renunciation is the necessary prelude to spiritual growth, to what modern biology describes, as I have previously referred to, as psychosocial evolution. It holds that man's evolution is not organic but psycho-social; that his psyche must grow and expand beyond the limitations of his body; it must find its oneness, in love and concern and service, with millions of other psyches in society. That is psycho-social evolution, what we call, in our Vedānta, spiritual growth. Along with physical growth, along with intellectual growth, every child must also be put on the road of its spiritual growth. Then alone will come the capacity to communicate with other people, to dig affections in each other, and to manifest ethical sense and human concern. These are the fruits, the by-products, of man's spiritual growth, of growth in his spiritual dimension, over and above his organic and mental dimensions. This is the human evolution that makes for human integration, on national and international dimensions. This is what Vivekananda calls *the manifestation of the divinity already within man,* which is how he defines religion. This urge for spiritual growth, for psycho-social evolution, for the manifestation of the divine within, of the kingdom of God that is within all, in the words of Jesus, is what the modern man is silently experiencing and what the modern world is waiting for, *as the next stage of human advance.* When this philosophy is grasped firmly and applied effectively, it will constitute an education for man capable of creating a new type of humanity, which will substitute peaceful dealings with each other, in place of aggressiveness and violence, and co-operation and service, in place of competition and exploitation.

21. *Human Problems: U. S. A. versus India*

I saw this urge in the hearts of thousands and thousands of young people in the West and the East. We need to understand this great philosophy, put our children on the road of spiritual growth, and release this powerful energy of human integration. *We have this philosophy and its spiritual know-how with us as a national heritage.* What we need is only to utilize it. While addressing several university audiences in America, this question was put to me: 'Swami, we have our problems and maladies; but you in India also have many problems and maladies.' 'Yes I replied; undoubtedly; but we have the remedy too available in our philosophy which is the philosophy of man in depth; but the remedies that are being made available to you from your prevailing philosophy of man are worse than the maladies themselves. India has a wonderful soul, pure, healthy, and strong. But her body is weak; her body-politic is unhealthy; it is smitten with the diseases of poverty, social inequality, and oppression. We want to change that body-politic; that is our problem. Your problem is different. You have a fine body; you have a strong body-politic. But you do not have a soul. You lost it in the debris of the modern industrial civilization. And now you are in search of a soul. Your thinkers, such as psychologist Jung of Zurich, have characterized your malady exactly as *'Modern Man in Search of a soul.'* Now, I ask, which is easier, to find a body or to find a soul?' To this question, they uniformly responded: So formulated, *your* problem is easier to solve than *ours,* provided you also do not lose your soul like us in the course of your current frantic efforts to gain a healthy body. That fear is there, I replied. But our robust philosophy—Vedānta—which is rational, practical, and universal, and which has also been reauthenticated in the modern age by spiritual and intellectual giants like Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, provides a guarantee that we shall at least muddle through to success in facing and solving our material problems, without raising deeper spiritual problems in the process.

22. *Eternal India*

This is a warning we have to take note of today. With a few more five-year plans we can remove our poverty; this problem must yield to the powerful touch of modern Western science and technology which we are already assimilating and applying in a big way. But how are we going to retain our soul in the process? How are we going to raise the quality of our men and women except through taking our first step in spiritual growth? If not, we shall develop into clever crooks, selfish and worldly, and convert our land into a medley of inter-personal and inter-group tensions. That will be a greater tragedy than the contemporary Western one. For, our country has a wealth of inspiring ideas; it is only economically backward, not spiritually or intellectually. In these matters, we in India are starving in the sight of plenty. If it were otherwise, the modern West would not have acclaimed Swami Vivekananda and responded to his philosophical and spiritual message. Even I have received, during my several lecture tours in the West, the utmost respect and love and receptivity in democratic as well as communist countries. Whether it is U. S. S. R., Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, or Cuba, even in these communist countries, I was welcomed and earnestly listened to. In some of them, I was the guest of the governments concerned, which arranged my public meetings also.

Here is one India, the India which I represented—the Eternal India, the *Amar Bhārat*--which has always been a source of a message of hope to humanity throughout the millennia of her long history.

23. *Contemporary India*

But there is another India—the contemporary India—with its multifarious problems, posing a challenge to our collective intelligence and wisdom. We shall solve the problems of that India with the strength of our trained minds, compassionate hearts, and capable hands. This is the truth, in the light of which our youths have to view themselves, their education, and their destiny; and have to train themselves, spiritually and scientifically, to face and overcome that material challenge. *Let their education burn these ideas into their souls, so that they may emerge out of their education as the guarantee of their nation's all-round progress.* Let us open our minds and hearts to the world of ideas coming from our own country and from every other part of the world. But we need to *assimilate* them and make them our own. We shall take ideas from Peking or Washington, Moscow or London; but we shall subject what we take to our intellectual and spiritual scrutiny and once accepted, digest and assimilate them and develop a broad and efficient character.

That is man-making and nation-building education and religion. Education is not just swallowing ideas but *digesting* and *assimilating* them. Strength comes only through that. You may go to a hotel and eat the fine food that is available there; but if you do not digest and assimilate them, it becomes poison, it makes the body toxic, and you suffer, instead of becoming strong and healthy. Similarly, when ideas are not digested, we suffer. *For the last few years, we have seen this phenomenon of the indigestion of political ideologies in our* *country*. And our nation has suffered, and is still suffering, from it. We need to take political and other ideas from other countries; but we need to make them into our own flesh and blood. That is how we shall develop a new work-efficiency and character-efficiency, without which we cannot hope to provide a healthy and progressive body-politic for the eternal soul of our nation.

24. *Human Inheritance : Genetic versus Cultural*

The immediate past generations have done great work for our national growth and development; they have struggled and sacrificed and created a wealth of ideas and institutions for modern India. They have achieved political independence for the nation, given it a strong democratic political structure, and put it on the scientific and industrial world-map. Let the youths of the present generation thank their worthy predecessors and train themselves to become worthier than them, and receive their cheers and godspeed, as upheld in Indian cultural wisdom:

> *Sarvatra jayam iccheta*
> *putrāt (śiṣyāt) icchet parājayam—*
> 'Desire for success everywhere; but desire for, and
> welcome, defeat from one's own children (or disciple)!'

This piece of Indian wisdom is upheld in the twentieth-century scientific view of culture which holds that culture, which is a specifically human phenomenon arising from man's capacity for thought and speech communication, is *cumulative experience*. Man is able not only to experience life, but also to store it in his literature, art, religion, philosophy, and science, and transmit it to coming generations. That is why culture becomes the most important element in the human heritage. Animals have only the genetic inheritance; it holds supreme sway over its life. But man has cultural inheritance over and above his genetic inheritance. Of these two, the genetic is largely fixed and final, with only small mutations which nature effects over long periods. But the cultural is resilient and educable. That is what makes education of such high importance to the human species. Biology defines culture as *mind duplicating itself,* just as it defines the living cell as *matter duplicating itself.* The appearance of the latter raised evolution from the cosmic to the organic level; the appearance of the former raises evolution from the organic to the cultural, i.e., the mental and the spiritual, level.

25. *Some Tested Values of Our Culture*

Herein lies the significance of the human cultural heritage; and national cultures become viewed as human culture developed in a particular geographical region or ethnical *milieu*. The child is inducted into this cultural inheritance first by its mother, then by its father, followed by its teachers and other individuals and agencies. Indian culture recognizes them, therefore, as man's *gurus* and honours them as such. And culture remains creative, when every new generation adds to the inheritance. From this point of view, we can see, in a new light, the importance of the Upaniṣads and the Gītā, the teachings of Buddha and Śaṅkarācārya, and of other great teachers and thinkers, not only for Indian culture but for the human cultural legacy in general. This applies also to the scientists, philosophers, thinkers, and spiritual teachers who appeared also in other parts of the world. We greet them all and thank them. They all have made our life's journey start, not from a zero, but from the asset of a rich cultural base.

In America today. there is not the appreciation of this scientific view of culture. In its rugged individualism, there is very little place for respect for father, mother, or teacher. And America today is suffering from this wrong view of life. And its youth is protesting against this self-sufficient individualism. Its youth are earnestly striving for a philosophy which will help man to *communicate* with man and to find his linkages with the rest of their own past and with the non-Western cultural world as well. We have that cultural wisdom with us from the past. Let us not miss it or neglect it. Let us assimilate it and thank our ancestors for the strength, and for the wealth of thought, which they have bequeathed to us through thousands of years of cultural development. The whole world respects this unique uninterruped cultural legacy of India. I have seen this attitude in the U. S. A., communist countries, Europe, South America, and elsewhere.

26. *The Making of Modern India*

The contemporary world, while thus respecting India's rich cultural legacy, also pities her for her present economic and social backwardness. But it also realizes today that that backwardness is on the way out. Let us, in India, be impressed also by our recent past as by our ancient past. For during the past 150 years, great personalities have arisen in our country and worked hard for our uplift. Each one of them was a universal personality. Such were Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru. They were not narrow or parochial in their outlook and sympathies. They were universal. Let the present generation thank them for what they did, and on the basis of what they did, let it build a better and healthier society. *We need this spirit of humility and responsiveness with respect to our past;* and we need to join to it a sense of the freedom of the spirit and the sense of responsibility for the present and the future. With this sense of responsibility, we shall learn to talk less, and to open up, more and more, our hearts to feel and our hands to work. That alone will make for an education adequate to meet the challenges of our colossal human problems. It will be far removed from the current dismal *stuffing-the-brain* process. This is how we can face the future with confidence.

27. *Nation-building and Our Youths*

The world is looking towards our country in a big way. Let us strengthen our democracy by strengthening its economic base and social structure; let us work with intelligence, efficiency, and team-spirit, and banish the centuries-old poverty of over 60 percent of our people. Let us reconstruct our society on the basis of freedom and equality, banishing all distinctions between man and man and all the old special privileges of one class or group over another. *And let us also be alert to see that no new class or group, claiming special privileges, raises its head in our midst.* It is in these vital fields that our education in general, and our youths in particular, have to make their presence and influence felt. *They must be always on the look-out to detect and oppose any tendency and effort by any group to claim special privileges.* If any group in modern India,—a country long steeped in all forms of special privileges, social exploitation, and human oppression-may be, the government servants, may be, the members of our Parliament and our state legislatures, may be, members of the press etc.—begins to claim special privileges, except strictly what are legitimate for their service to the nation, *our youths must boldly stand up and protest and scotch all such moves and protect the health of our newly emerging egalitarian social order.* They will receive great stimulus and strength in this work from the words of Swami Vivekananda, the great teacher of Vedānta, on the subject, uttered in the course of his lecture on 'Vedānta and Indian life,' delivered in Madras in 1897. (*The Complete Works,* Vol III, Eighth Edition p. 246):

> 'They should be knocked on the head. If you teach Vedānta to the fisherman, he will say, I am as good a man as you; I am a fisherman, you are a philosopher: but I have the same God in me as you have in you. And that is what we want. No privilege for any one; equal chances for all. Let everyone be taught that the divine is within, and everyone will work out his own salvation.'

Again, in the course of his lecture on 'Vedanta and Privilege' delivered in London a year earlier, he said (*ibid.,* Vol. I, Eleventh Edition, pp. 423-25):

> 'But the idea of privilege is the bane of human life. ... And whenever privilege is broken down, more and more light and progress come to a race. This struggle we see all around us. Of course, there is first the brutal idea of privilege, that of the strong over the weak. There is the privilege of wealth. ... There is the still subtler and more powerful privilege of intellect; because one man knows more than others, he claims more privilege. And the last of all, and the worst, because the most tyrannical, is the privilege of spirituality. If some persons think they know more of spirituality, of God, they claim a superior privilege over everyone else. They say: 'Come down and worship us, ye common herds; we are the messengers of God, you have to worship us'. None can be Vedāntists and at the same time admit of privilege to any one, either mental, physical, or spiritual; absolutely no privilege for any one. The same power is in every man, the one manifesting more, the other less; the same potentiality is in everyone. Where is the claim to privilege? ...
>
> 'The work of the Advaita Philosophy, therefore, is to break down all these privileges. It is the hardest work of all, and curious to say, it has been less active, than anywhere else, in the land of its birth. If there is any land of privilege, it is the land which gave birth to this philosophy—privilege for the spiritual man as well as for the man of birth. ...
>
> 'The difference between God and the Devil is in nothing except in unselfishness and selfishness. The Devil knows as much as God, is as powerful as God; only he has no holiness—that makes him a Devil. Apply the same idea to the modern world. Excess of knowledge and power, without holiness, makes human beings devils. Tremendous power is being acquired by the manufacture of machines and other appliances, and privilege is claimed today as it never has been claimed in the history

> of the world. That is why the Vedanta wants to preach against it, to break down this tyrannizing over the souls of men.'

Again, in his lecture on 'Privilege', delivered in London about the same time, he said (*ibid.*, pp. 434):

> 'Therefore the absolute sameness of conditions, if that be the aim of ethics, appears to be impossible. That all men should be the same, could never be, however we might try. Men will be born differentiated. Some will have more power than others; some will have natural capacities, others not; some will have perfect bodies, others not. We can never stop that. ...
>
> 'But what can be attained is elimination of privilege. That is really the work before the whole world. ... The enjoyment of advantage over another is privilege, and throughout the ages, the aim ot morality has been its destruction. This is the work which tends towards sameness, towards unity, without destroying variety.'

That is how democracy can be strengthened in our country. *There is plenty of silent, solid, national work for our young people to do in India.* If American youths can fight against racial inequality, if they can fight against their state's unjust Vietnam war, and succeed in changing the direction of state policies, why cannot, and do not, our youths go out into our villages during vacations and fight against social injustices like untouchability? If our youths do not do so yet, it only means that their social conscience is not roused, that their youthful energies have not received creative channels of expression, that their education is not of the man-making and nation-building variety. Much of the unrest in our educational institutions, and the destruction of public property indulged in by our youths, and even by some of our older folk, proceed from this vacuum of a social commitment, from this absence of the creative channelling of the enormous energies of our youth. *Here the failure of our teachers is writ large.* They have failed to give this creative inspiration and guidance to our youths. Our teachers must learn to take advantage of the current national buoyancy, the current tide of national enthusiasm, in the affairs of their nation, and sail onward with their students at its flood, beckoning the nation to follow them.

28. *Conclusion*

That is the role of teachers in India. That is why he is called *guru* and the student is called *sisya*. But, today, we have discarded these meaningful words and the healthy sentiments attached to them, from our education,and have confined them to the narrowly understood field of religion, and have consequently cheapened our education into a dismal search for degrees and jobs from what it was meant to be, namely, *a luminous search for knowledge and qualitative life-excellence.* But our neighbouring country of Indonesia still preserves this Indian culture value. There, teachers are still called *gurus* and students are known as *śiṣya,* or *śiṣyāya* in the Indonesian language. I was impressed by this practice in Indonesia and by the atmosphere of its education, wherein teachers are given the respect due to a **guru** and are not looked upon and tolerated as a mere *bread-winning pedagogue.* It is high time that our education recaptures that *guru-śiṣya* relationship and, with mutual faith and respect and love, which help to enhance the talents and energies of both, *convert our educational institutions into dynamic centres of human growth, development, and fulfilment.*

15

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MAN-MAKING EDUCATION *

1. *Introduction*

I AM very thankful to Sri Radha Krishna, Vice-Chancellor of the Kanpur University, for inviting me to address you this afternoon. Educationist and lover of our students as he is, he has also thoughtfully utilised the occasion of this Convocation to arrange a week-long programme of lectures by me in several of his University's constituent colleges, not only in Kanpur but also in the far away towns of Banda and Jhansi and the village of Bakewar, most of whose students will not be in a position to attend this Convocation in Kanpur.

2. *The 'Tapas' of Education*

I congratulate those hundreds of students among you who have received today their degrees and diplomas, prizes and medals. Ever since you left the care-free and warm laps of your mothers to enter a primary school, and more especially since you entered this university as undergraduate students, you have been working hard at what the world calls getting educated, acquiring knowledge, and expanding the mind. This is the central discipline of every great culture, a discipline which our own national tradition calls by that rich Sanskrit word *tapas,* the *tapas* of knowledge. This *tapas* is the one source of strength and inspiration behind man's achievements in the fields of economics or politics, science, or religion. *Svādhyāyā-pravacana,* learning and teaching, are the supreme *tapas,* says the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* (I. ix. 1) and adds (III. i. 1): *Sa tapo atapyata*—'he (the student) performed *tapas*.' Commenting on this passage and giving a significant definition of the word *tapas* from a verse in the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti,* Śāṅkarācārya says:

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*Convocation Address at the Kanpur University, Kanpur, Uttara Pradesh, 13th December 1970

Sarveṣām hi niyata-sādhya-viṣayāṇāṁ . ***sādhanānām*** *tapa eva sādhakatamam sādhanam iti hi prasiddhaṁ loke. ...* ***Tacca tapo*** *bāhyāntahkarana* samādhānaṃ. ... *Manasaśca indriyanām ca hi aikāgryam tapa ucyate; tat* ***jyāyaḥ*** *sarvadharmebhyaḥ sa dharmaḥ para ucyate, iti smrteḥ—*

'It is well known in the world that, of all the aids to the attainment of objects which can be attained by resort to means, *tapas* is the most excellent means. ... And such *tapas* is the tranquillization of the outer and inner sense organs (the sense organs and the mind). ... "The concentration (of the energies) of the mind and the senses is supreme *tapas;* it is greater than all other *dharmās;* it is (in fact) the supreme *dharma*", as the *Smṛti* puts it.

This is the discipline that helps man to mobilize the enormous resources within his personality and, through that, makes him also capable of mobilizing the enormous resources of his external natural and social environments, so as to develop science and technology, religion and the arts, in short, all his culture and civilization.

3. *Manliness: Its Energy Source*

What *tapas* each one of you has undergone so far for obtaining your degrees is nothing compared to what you have to undergo hereafter for your personal development, and what your nation will call upon you to undergo, in the next chapter of your life. For, that life, in the context of our nation today, is going to be intertwined with the lives of millions and millions of your fellow-countrymen, who have been in the darkness of ignorance and the privations of poverty for centuries, and who are crying out to our new-won political freedom to lift them out of that darkness and privation to light and life. And you are the agents of our national freedom to effect this revolutionary social change. It is only by playing this role effectively that you will achieve your own self-development, apart from the development of your nation. You cannot play a worthier role in life than this. But to play this role effectively, you need, not only the intellectual energy obtained from knowledge-seeking, but also the spiritual energy obtained from character-seeking; both these form integral parts of true education. *The fusion of these two energies is a human being makes for manliness.* And the *philosophy of man-making education*, a term coined, along with a similar meaningful term, namely, *man-making religion*, by Swami Vivekananda, and used with telling effect by him, is the theme of my address to you this afternoon.

4. *The Twin Evils of Jealousy and Slavery*

But before entering into the subject, I wish to make an observation about the brief disturbance created at the commencement of today's **proceedings**by the small group of students who, I am told, were ventilating their grievances against the university for not awarding them degrees, for which the university, I am assured, has very valid reasons. A student, on his part, has valid reasons to take even a failure in good grace. But such disturbances, mild or serious, are occurring in increasing numbers in our academic institutions and during academic functions. Apart from other considerations, such behaviour exhibits an increasing good-bye to good taste and self-discipline by our people, behind which lurks the mood of jealousy that someone is getting something which has been denied to me; and such jealousy is the offspring of slavery. Slavery and jealousy are the obverse and the reverse of the same coin, says Swami Vivekananda. Their presence in a man depresses his character to a low level and makes it ineffective in personal life and social functioning. I was introduced to their ugly features even as a young high school student by the literature of Swami Vivekananda which also held before me, through an inspiring episode narrated by him in the last of his four lectures on 'Practical Vedanta' delivered in London in 1896, the elevating picture of human character bereft of these twin evils (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol II, p. 351):

'I once read a story about some ships that were caught in a cyclone in the South sea Islands, and there was a picture of it in the *Illustrated London News:* All of them were wrecked except one English vessel, which weathered the storm. The picture showed the men who were going to be drowned, standing on the decks (of H.M.S. Colliope of Britain and the American warships stationed at Samoa), and cheering the people who were sailing through the storm. Be brave and generous like that. Do not drag others down to where you are.'

How far away we are as a nation from the character-excellence depicted in that episode! If any of our people had been involved in that situation, how would we have reacted? Most likely, we would have felt intense jealousy for those who escaped the disaster and death! And, unlike those English and American sailors who, while facing death themselves, were waving and shouting bravo to those who escaped the disaster, we would have grumbled and sworn at them in foul language for not dying along with us!

Our mutual jealousies did not allow us to develop into a nation for a few centuries; centuries of slavery have further implanted this mood of jealousy deeply in many of us, making us unhappy at the success of others, at the welfare of others, at the very thought of some one else going faster than us in the race of life. This will continue to affect us until, through our education, through our own thinking processes, and through self-discipline, we have absorbed the spirit of freedom and its corollary of the sense of responsibility. This alone can make us grow into mature personalities. That, again, connotes *manliness* about which I shall have to say more in the course of this lecture.

5. *Mind: Free versus Unfree*

We produced a galaxy of free-minded people when we were unfree; we have, alas, large numbers of unfree-minded people in our free nation today! Indisciplined and irresponsible speech and behaviour, which are on the increase since our independence, are marks of this inner unfreedom and not of freedom.

Our poet Rabindranath Tagore has sung about man's search for, and attainment of, this freedom of mind and spirit, and has invoked its blessings on our people, in a few memorable lines of his *Gītāñjali* which inspired me at high school (pp.27-28, 1953 Edition):

> Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
>
> Where knowledge is free;
>
> Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by
>
> narrow domestic walls;
>
> Where words come out from the depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way in the dreary desert sand of dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action;

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake!

6. *Training the Mind versus Stuffing the Brain*

I spoke of manliness as the result of the fusion of two energies in the human personality, namely, the intellectual energy of knowledge and the spiritual energy of character and dedication. The field for the cultivation of these two energies is life itself. A merely book-centred education does not generate either the energy of knowledge or the energy of character. Unfortunately, that is the type of education that we have in our country; we have expanded education in a big way since our independence; we have established hundreds of schools and colleges and universities; but we have so far failed to improve our education *qualitatively*—nay, it has even gone down from what it was before the country became free.

Even in the limited field of the training for intellectual knowledge, our education has been more *instruction* than *education*, more conveying of static information than stimulation of thinking, more *stuffing the brain* than *training the mind*. The following criticism of American education, voiced by an American thinker in the American *National Parent-Teacher Journal* (April 1955), applies more relevantly to education in our own country. He defines current education as—

'that mysterious process whereby information passes from the lecture notes of the professor, through the fountain pen and onto the notebook of the student, without passing through the mind of either!'

7. *Stagnation and Its Evil Fruits*

Staticity of mind has been with us for a few centuries. Our nation bears the impress of arrested growth. Stagnation in thought resulted in stagnation in society. Our life, our attitudes, our interests, and our sympathies began to move increasingly in narrower and narrower circles. This invited foreign invasions, which became endemic for centuries.

Weakness begot further weakness; the spirit of resistance against injustice and oppression and humiliation, whether inflicted by foreign invaders or those bred within, and the capacity to forge a united national will against the nation's thwarting obstacles, became blasted by the end of the eighteenth century; and a spirit of resignation descended upon us by the time the British planted themselves firmly in our land.

Whereas, for thousands of years, our nation had been creative and dynamic, and had powerfully influenced the history of other nations, during the past few centuries, we had become static and stagnant and had ceased to be creative. We became *creatures of history* instead of being *creators of history*. Other nations created history and we became its victims. We were rescued from this darkness by our great thinkers and leaders of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the powerful spiritual, cultural, and political movements initiated by them. They made India creative once again. The most dynamic of them all, both as to the sweep and depth of his thought and as to the infinite sympathies of his heart, was Swami Vivekananda. It was he who summoned our nation to develop fearlessness, character-efficiency, a capacity for teamwork, and a sense of dedication. And he expounded a philosophy of education designed to develop these human resources in our people, a philosophy designed to achieve *nation-building* through *man-making*.

8. *Vivekananda's Educational Vision*

The central theme of that philosophy is *education as training of the mind and assimilation of ideas,* leading to dynamism of character and creativity of personality, and not as mere *book-learning* or *stuffing of the brain,* resulting in stagnation of personality.

'His words are great music,' says Romain Rolland about Vivekananda's utterances. It will be relevant to give a few passages from a little book entitled *Education,* which is a collection of his utterances on the subject and which carries the following brief **Foreword** by Mahatma Gandhi:

'Surely, Swami Vivekananda's writings need no introduction from anybody. They make their own irresistible appeal.'

'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. (p. 1).

'Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, *assimilation* of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. If education were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopaedias the *Ṛṣis*.

'Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourselves educated. Is this education? What is the goal of your education? Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bhārata, proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfil this want? The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name?

'We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet. What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day.

'The end of all education, all training, should be *man-making*..The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education.

'What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face. It is man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want.' (pp. 6-8).

9. *Bhartṛhari on Wrong Education*

We have too long indulged in education as mere stuffing of the brain, as mere static communication of information. Vivekananda often highlighted the weakness of such an education by quoting a verse from our philosopher, king, and poet, Bhartṛhari who hailed from the neighbouring Madhya-Pradesh region about thirteen hundred years ago and who compares the product of such an education to an ass:

Yathā kharaḥ candana bhāravāhi
bhārasya vettā na tu candanasya—

'Like an ass which carries a load of sandalwood on its back, but which knows only its weight but not its value.'

This is what happens to a student when he stuffs his brain with ideas and information, with facts and formulae, but does not train his mind, assimilate the ideas, and develop character-efficiency. To study logic but to think illogically, to study grammar but to speak ungrammatically, to study law but to behave lawlessly, to study civics but to live and act without the civic sense, to study the sciences but to remain innocent of the scientific spirit and temper, of love of truth, intellectual detachment, passion and respect for facts, and precision in thought and speech, and to study Indian history, but to ignore its lessons and warnings in one's attitudes and behaviour—that, for want of unity and national vision, and due to caste and other divisive loyalties, we, rich and poor alike, have lost our political freedom again and again and suffered untold humiliations—is to remain, like the ass with respect to the sandalwood on its back, aware of the *weight* of knowledge in one's head but not its *value* for one's life or the nation's destiny.

10. *The Anatomy of Our Failure*

As a people, we are not lacking in intelligence; as a country, we are not lacking in natural or human resources; as a culture, we are not lacking in great eras of expansive minds and impressive achievements.

But, in spite of all these advantages, we became victims of history during the past few centuries. This reveals only one thing, namely, our character-deficiency. And, even after getting into the light of political freedom after centuries of the darkness of slavery, we have not got rid of those character-traits of ours which made us victims of history for long years, we have not captured those virtues and graces which make for national efficiency, which can protect and enhance the freedom we have won.

We have not learned to think clearly, to put national interest before private gain, to work hard and efficiently, and to work in team-spirit. In spite of all the phenomenal expansion of our education, we have not achieved a commensurate increase in either personality-efficiency or productivity-efficiency.

In the field of economic growth rate, we are about ninetieth in the world and about thirtieth even with respect to Asian countries, according to the United Nations statistics. How shall we capture for our nation today a forward march with steady steps in place of its uncertain and wobbly movements? It is to our educational institutions, especially to our universities, that our nation turns to raise these questions and to find the answers. That is the role of education, more especially of the *very costly higher education,* in a free society.

11. *Education as National Braintrust*

If I participate in a Convocation like this, or if I go to address students and teachers in our various universities and colleges, it is only with a view to raising and thinking together and finding, with students and teachers, these questions and their answers. Man is the only inter-thinking species in nature, says biology, as he is the only inter-breeding species as well. It is by inter-thinking that he advances his evolution, and builds up edifices of culture and civilization. Our nation today is passing through the most difficult, the most challenging, and the most crucial transition of its millennia of history. In its scope and range and results, this transition is of a truly revolutionary dimension. Our educational institutions, especially our universities, in our free democracy today, cannot have a nobler mission than that of using our new-won freedom, after centuries of political subjection and social stagnation, to become the *braintrust* of our great nation and the effective agent for the intelligent guidance of the nation's revolutionary social changes. To play this role effectively, our education must be guided by the philosophy of, what Vivekananda calls, *man-making*, for which it needs to have a firm grip on four important factors of the modern transition:

12. *A Grip on Four Factors*

Firstly, our education must have a discriminative grasp of the strong and weak points of our hoary national culture and tradition. It is obvious that there are elements in it which made for our long stagnation, for our centuries-long political subjection and social fragmentation, for our becoming in recent centuries *victims of history* after being *its creators* for a few thousand years. At the same time, it is also obvious that it has an inner core of spiritual strength which has enabled it, among all world cultures, not only to continue to function on the world stage in spite of the ups and downs of its long history, a fraction of which has destroyed all other ancient cultures, but also to flame forth into an unprecedented renaissance in the last century, when threatened by the powerful world-dominating modern Western culture, which has enabled it to throw up a galaxy of world-moving personalities like Sri Ramakrisnna, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi.

Secondly, our education must have a discriminative grasp of the strong and weak points of that modern Western culture, whose stimulus it was, it is now obvious, that woke us up from our long sleep, stirred us out of our long stagnation, made us creative once more, and made us capable not only of accepting and facing the challenge of the powerful West but also of throwing our own cultural challenge to it in turn. The response of the best minds of modern India to the positive elements of Western culture reveals a basic spiritual kinship between the two and their relevance to the strengthening of the material and social bases of our own culture, which have been its weak points. At the same time, that Western culture has its weak points in those negative elements which are positively harmful to human society, whether of East or West, and which have already started afflicting Western society itself in a big way. Thus a discriminative mind will accept science but reject materialism, welcome technology to improve the material conditions of human life but reject such notions as that man has no spiritual dimension beyond his physical and organic levels and that organic satisfactions are the highest aim of human life. Such notions, backed by the West's philosophy of man arising from its acquaintance with only a surface view of him, need to be assessed in the light of India's own philosophy of man arising from her acquaintance with a depth-view of him.

Thirdly, our education must have a firm grasp of the realities of contemporary India; it must have a discriminative understanding of our national social phenomenon, which reveals a sad contrast of a thin minority of cultural haves at its top co-existing now, and for centuries past, with a thick majority of cultural have-nots below. That thin minority at the top can stand comparison in intellectual, social, or cultural standards, though certainly not in its public spirit or political vision, with the best in any nation. But the challenge to Indian wisdom lies in the abject condition of the millions of that majority who are below that thin upper crust, and in the very wide gulf separating the two. Those millions have not ever experienced the dignity and glory of man, except in snatches of spiritual inspiration which they received from some of India's lovable saints and which have imparted a light to their eyes and a refinement to their hearts, in spite of their abject poverty and misery. The nation's political systems, socio-economic organizations, and almost all established religions, have always weighed heavily on them. Their cruel neglect has been the one cause of India's long political downfall, which reveals only the bankruptcy of social wisdom and political inefficiency of that minority at the top.

Fourthly, our education must help our people to combine the strong and tested elements of the world-wide modern Western tradition with the strong and tested elements of our own hoary national tradition through *a natural process of assimilation*, so as to further and complete the evolution of a progressive modern Indian society. The foundation and stimulus for this creative national synthesis has already been provided for us by the national renaissance of the nineteenth century and specially, as I had said earlier, in the thought and example of its most authentic, dynamic, and comprehensive expression in Swami Vivekananda. That stimulus is meant to help us to build our nation on the basis of a fundamental strength derived from the *assimilation* of the enormous *natural* resources of the nation, obtained through modern technology, of the enormous *human* resources of our nation, obtained through our national education. Referring to the all-round creative synthesis achieved by Vivekananda in his personality and in his message, Romain Rolland says (*Life of Vivekananda*, page 281: 1965 Edition):

'In the two words, equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action, from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways that he taught had its own limits, but he himself had been through them all and embraced them all. As in a Quadriga, he held the reins of all four ways of truth, and he travelled towards unity along them all simultaneously. He was the personification of the harmony of all human energy.'

13. *Maturity: Physical and Mental*

It is only when our universities, through their teachers and general set-up, become intellectually alert to these four factors that they become what they are meant to be, namely, the vanguard of the nation's march to destiny. It is only then that they become capable of *inspiring* our youths instead of merely *instructing* them. A student enters a university as an individual, physically mature and with an initial mental maturity as well, which finds expression in a desire to think for himself or herself and to be treated increasingly as an adult. It is the university's function and privilege to help him or her to achieve full mental maturity. This is never attained merely by mastering, much less by titbit memorizing, the chosen subjects and passing an examination on them. Mastering a subject or subjects is, of course, necessary but not sufficient. What is more important is the capturing of a free mind and a responsible outlook which alone can make the knowledge gained creative, dynamic, and socially effective. That is the one source of personality efficiency and of the capacity to make an impact on the social situation. Such students then become not just *individuals* in search of their own private career and destiny, but *persons* whose hearts pulsate with the aspirations and struggles of millions of their fellow-countrymen. Their studies enable them to emotionally identify themselves with the joys and sorrows, victories and humiliations, of their nation; they help them not only *to dream* of a better life for their people, free from poverty, ignorance, and oppression, but also *to work out*, as their nation's agents, this glorious vision of human transformation.

14. *Democracy: Real versus Formal*

Today's university students belong mostly to the post-independence generation. Every such student must realize that independence, so far as their country is concerned, means nothing more than the freedom *to dream* and *to work out* the economic, political, cultural, and spiritual fulfilment of his or her nation, of his or her five hundred and fifty million fellow-citizens, the majority of whom live, and have been living, at sub-human levels of existence. This is a gigantic task. In the modern world context, it is urgent not only in terms of broad human values, but also in terms of the preservation of our new-won political freedom and the stability of our infant democratic state.

A democratic state derives its strength from the people who derive benefits from that state. They then cheerfully shoulder its burdens and responsibilities. It is obvious that the Indian democratic state is far far away from this description. Its benefits reach a few, while its burdens belong to the many. That is its weakness, its potential source of instability. Its constitution has recognized it and has suggested measures to remove this weakness; it has placed the burden on our people to take energetic measures to broadbase their democratic state by making its benefits reach every segment of its citizens. This can be achieved only by political democracy developing into economic and social democracy; it is only then that it becomes democracy in the true sense of the term, not just democracy *in form*, but democracy *in content*. It is only then that the vast mass of the people not only will be *in* it, mostly indifferent and apathetic and occasionally hostile, but also will be *of* it, as true citizens with *a sense of belonging*. Only by achieving this, shall we make our state strong and be in a position honestly to attach the words 'modern' and 'progressive' to it.

15 *Man-making Education for a Double Efficiency*

And the only means to this achievement is education, conceived, as I said earlier, as *man-making education*. And for the first time in our long history, we can not only hope for, but are also in a position to realize, this all round development of our people, thanks to modern world conditions and the efficient technology of the modern age. To realize this, what we need is to capture the intellectual and moral energy to take full advantage of these favourable conditions, and to effect a double efficiency in our people through our educational process, namely, thought and personality-efficiency, within, and work and productive-efficiency, without. *This double efficiency is the essence of a man-making education.* As

Vivekananda pointed out, it is only when we have restored our sunken millions to human dignity and worth that we can claim to be men; till then we shall have to treat ourselves as candidates to that high estate; and Vivekananda conceived education, and also religion, as *the training to equip us to claim and to realize that high estate.* So he always placed stress on a man-making education and a man-making religion. Every claim needs to stand the test of life and experience. Our claim to be a mature civilized people has today to face the challenge of the widespread human backwardness of our society. Human intelligence develops the power to identify and solve human problems through the training of that intelligence in purposive thinking and social feeling and social action. *The product of such training is personality-energy and character-efficiency.* It is this energy that is capable of mobilizing all types of physical and social energy resources and investing them in the social field and to make society grow in health and vigour. This is the energy that we have to develop in our people today, so that we cease to be passive spectators of human suffering, so that we cease to throw our hands up in despair and resignation, but become not only adequate, but more than adequate, to our mounting problems, so that these problems yield to the sure touch of our trained mind and hand.

16 *Need for Ātma-śraddhā*

Swami Vivekananda often spoke of the need for our people to develop *śraddhā* or faith, not faith in some external powers, but in oneself. Said he (*Teachings of Swami Vivekananda,* 1948 Edition pp. 58-62):

'All such ideas as we cannot do this, or we cannot do that, are superstitions. Vedanta teaches men to have faith in themselves first. As certain religions of the world say that a man who does not believe in a Personal God outside of himself is an atheist, so Vedanta says, a man who does not believe in himself is an atheist. Not believing in the glory of our own soul is what Vedānta calls atheism.

'The old religions said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God; the new religion says that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not selfish faith, because Vedānta, again is the doctrine of oneness. It means faith in all because you are all. ..., 'Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, faith in God—this is the secret of greatness. If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods, and in all the gods which foreigners have now and again introduced into your midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves, and stand up on that faith and be strong; that is what we need. ...

'This faith in themselves was in the hearts of our ancestors, this faith in themselves was the motive power that pushed them forward and forward in the march of civilization, and if there has been degeneration, if there has been defect, mark my words, you will find that degradation to have started on the day our people lost faith in themselves.'

He wanted us to have faith in the infinite Self that is within us, the Atman, the source of infinite energy and power. All faith in gods and in other human beings, to be fruitful, is to be based on this prior faith in oneself.

17. *The Heroic Touch*

Too long have we pursued cheap and easy ways, be it in the field of making money, or passing examinations, or even in the matter of getting salvation. This discloses an utter lack of the heroic touch, an utter absence of the youthful spirit. It discloses only a jaded old mind and mood. And I am sorry to find that increasing numbers of our youths betray this jaded old mind and mood, since they seek easy ways of getting education, passing examinations, making money, and even reaching God. To meet with physically old people still possessing youthful daring and spirit of adventure is as exhilarating as to meet with physically young people with jaded minds, ever seeking cheap and easy ways, is depressing. Post-independence India presents this contrast and, along with it, proclaims also the failure of its policy and programme of educating the nation's youth. True education must help the youth not only to develop physical vitality and sharpen their intelligence, but also to capture the heroic spirit, to ignite what the Greeks called the *Promethean* spark, what India calls the *Bhagiratha* spark, in them, by developing and training their will to welcome every opportunity to face hardships and struggles and to utilize their psycho-physical organism to render service to their fellowmen. They need to respond to the sentiment expressed by John Morley, the eminent nineteenth-century English politician and writer, in his appreciation of what he saw in his teacher John Stuart Mill: To be in the rear of opportunity in matters of indulgence is as valuable a habit as to be in the front of opportunity in matters of enterprise. This was what Vivekananda had wanted our education to contribute to our national development. In a letter written from America, he says (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol. V, p. 15, Ninth Edition):

> 'A hundred thousand men and women, fired with zeal of holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor, for the fallen, and the downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land, preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of social raising up—the gospel of equality.'

18. *Man: Democratic versus Feudal*

This is the true mind and face of a national system of education. It is youths of this heroic type, who have imbibed also the democratic outlook and temper, in place of the erstwhile feudal one, that should be turned out of our educational institutions in increasing numbers, to fill our union and state secretariats and field services, our national research laboratories, our public and private sector agricultural and industrial undertakings. our intellectual professions, our union and state legislatures, and, what is more, our ever-expanding teaching fraternity itself. *A democratic socio-political order can be established and run only by democratic minds, and not by feudal minds.* When we speak of treason, we generally refer to political treason. But it is a rare occurrence in a state. Vivekananda refers to another type of treason, which we in India have been practising on a vast scale. In a letter written from America in 1894 he says (*Complete Works,* Vol. V, p. 58):

> 'So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them!'

After securing an education, if men and women become selfish and self-centred, if they seek only private gain and pleasure unmindful of the national interest, indulge in various forms of corruption and malpractices, and do not care to serve the nation from their seats of responsibility, we have treason of the most serious kind, says Vivekananda. Education is a costly programme today. To turn out a single graduate, the state spends between fifteen to twenty thousand rupees. An engineering or medical student may cost four times as much. The student concerned pays hardly a fraction of this as fees. If a student, at the end of his studies, does not equip himself or herself with a spirit of dedication to serve the nation, but goes about utilizing all this costly education to serve his or her own private ends only, he or she fails to discharge a heavy social debt; he or she lives in debt and dies in debt, says the Hindu spiritual tradition. Such a life has not experienced the joy of living; for, as Vivekananda expressed it (*Complete Works*, Vol. IV. p 363, 1966 Edition):

> 'This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others; the rest are more dead than alive.'

19. *Evolution versus Ethics*

The philosophy of man-making education is not the nursery of kill-joy ascetics or other-worldly saints. Its scope lies in the fullest development of man, *here* and *now*. It recognizes the legitimate place of self-seeking impulses and activities in human life, including man's need for organic satisfactions. But it has seen a profound depth to the human personality. It has discovered a divine spark in man, over and above his organic dimension, whose stirring and flaming forth alone can make for the *qualitative* enrichment of human life and the achievement of human fulfilment, individual and collective. *This is the birthright of every human being, irrespective of caste, race, creed or sex, says India's great philosophy, Vedānta.* Vivekananda, therefore, defines education almost exactly as he defines religion, as the manifestation of this trans-organic dimension of the human personality. 'Education is the *manifestation* of the *perfection* already in man' and 'Religion is the *manifestation* of the *divinity* already in man'.

The ego, centred in his organic system. and subordinate to it, is not the ultimate truth about man or his highest glory and excellence, says Vedānta; so says also every one of the great religions of the world. Values—ethical, aesthetic, or spiritual—do not proceed from that level of his personality. At that level, man is self-centred and is a seeker merely of profit and pleasure, a seeker merely of organic satisfactions, organic survival, and numerical increase. Nineteenth-century biology, in its theory of evolution, viewed him entirely in this form; it had no idea of the spiritual depths behind his organic system. Accordingly, it could not explain his moral and ethical sense and behaviour through its theory of evolution; it explained the organic evolutionary processes only as a product of a struggle for existence, competition, and survival of the fittest. Evolution and ethics, according to nineteenth-century biology, ran parallel courses. Highlighting this deficiency of the contemporary biology of the nineteenth century, and the significance of the ethical sense in man, Thomas Huxley, collaborator of Darwin, says in his *Evolution and Ethics*:

> 'Men in society are undoubtedly subject to the cosmic process. But the influence of the cosmic process on the evolution of society is the greater, the more rudimentary its civilization. *Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process,* the end of which is not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest, in respect of the whole of the conditions which obtain, but of those who are ethically the best.
>
> 'The practice of that which is ethically the best—what we call goodness or virtue—involves a course of conduct which, in all respects, is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence. In place of ruthless self-assertion, it demands self-restraint; in place of thrusting aside, or treading down, all competitors, it requires that the individual shall not merely respect, but shall help, his fellows; *its influence is directed, not so much to the survival of the fittest, as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive.* It repudiates the gladiatorial theory of existence. *It demands that each man who enters into the enjoyment of the advantages of a polity shall be mindful of his debt to those who have laboriously constructed it*; and shall take heed that no act of his weakens the fabric in which he has been permitted to live. *Laws and moral precepts are directed to the end of curbing the cosmic process, and reminding the individual of his duty to the community,* to the protection and influence of which he owes, if not existence itself, at least the life of something better than a brutal savage. (*italics* not by the author)

20. *The Primacy of Dharma*

If the cosmic process does not disclose the presence of any ethical sense, but the human personality does reveal it, we shall have to seek for its origin in the depths of the human personality itself. This is what Vedānta did a few thousand years ago in India and discovered ethical sense as the first expression, in the life of man, of the impact of the Atman, the infinite and immortal spiritual reality behind man and nature. This ethical sense is what India calls by her significant Sanskṛit term, *dharma,* which, as defined by the *Mahābhārata,* is the integrating principle between man and man in society: *dhāraṇāt dharma ityāhuḥ, dharmo dhārayate prajāḥ.* All values that sustain and enhance life are spiritual, and not material or mechanical. Revealing the post-war reaction against the crude materialism of the nineteenth-century, which presented even values as material, the late Bertrand Russell protestingly says (*The Impact of Science on Society, p.* 77):

> 'The machine is the modern form of Satan and its worship is the modern diabolism. ... Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something no political philosopher must forget.'

21. *Dharma as Psycho-social Evolution*

Twentieth-century biology, thanks to a century of revolutionary developments since Darwin, tends today to bridge the gulf between evolution and ethics, by presenting evolution itself as rising, at the human stage, above its organic phase to a higher phase; and it calls this new phase *psychosocial* evolution;it relegates organic evolution to the pre-human stage; it also relegates the three aims of organic satisfactions, organic survival, and numerical increase, as relevant to that stage only. It presents the goal of evolution at the human stage as *fulfilment,* individual and collective, and presents *quality* as the criterion of evolution at the human stage, unlike the criterion of *quantity* of the pre-human stage. It discovers that, with the evolution of the cerebral system in man, nature has perfected an organ, with the help of which man can develop any organ which he may stand in need of, more efficiently and quickly than what nature can do for him through her long and wasteful processes.

At the human stage, therefore, we have to search for the main trend of evolution, says twentieth-century biology, at the transorganic level, in which awareness, which has been a significant datum since the appearance of the living cell on the horizon of evolution, and which has been getting defined and clarified and developed in the course of organic evolution, achieves a breakthrough from the *awareness of the not-self* of the pre-human stage to the new significant dimension of the *awareness of the self* of the human stage, and a steady extension of the bounds of this self from oneself to others in society through expansion of ethical sense. This is *psychosocial evolution* in which the human psyche or self breaks down its initial confinement to the protecting shell of its physical organism and the ego centred in it, like a butterfly coming out of its chrysalis stage, and expands and evolves in trans-organic dimension and realizes its spiritual oneness with an ever-increasing number of other psyches in society. Through such a unique evolution, man—bound, limited, and trivial though he still is in the organic sense—discloses himself as essentially free, unlimited, and big, in his spiritual dimension. This is the vast and significant dimension of man revealed in his ethical, aesthetic, and spiritual greatness. An individual, and yet not an individual; an individual who has grown into a *person,* rich and warm and united with other individuals, through tendrils of love and concern; an infinite spiritual presence manifesting through the tiny organic individuality.

22. *Individuality versus Personality*

An individual, strictly speaking, is a limited and closed entity under the control of its own centripetal psychic forces. This is the organism-centred ego, whose social expression is collision with other egos with a view to dominating them and exploiting them. This is the *raw* 'I', in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, dangerous to others and harmful to itself. The only relationship that such an individual can have with other similar individuals, says Bertrand Russell, is what obtains between one billiard ball and another billiard ball, namely, collision. This does not disclose the presence of ethical sense or the onset of psychosocial evolution. It discloses only the tyranny of the sensory system on man, the slavery of his self to his organic system. Fortunately, such individuals are very very rare in any society. Most individuals are on the high road of psychosocial evolution, some occasionally and at its very early stages, some far advanced, and most people in its various intermediate levels. Whatever be the stage, every such individual has ceased to be just an individual of the billiard ball type and become a *person,* with some capacity to dig his or her affections in one or more other individuals, and *vice versa*. The term 'person' immediately suggests the presence of a psychic flesh and blood in man. 'Persons are individuals', says biologist Sir Julian Huxley, 'who transcend their (merely) organic individuality in *conscious* (social) *participation.*' This is the *ripe* 'I', in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, creative and beneficent. *The outward expression of persons, therefore, unlike that of individuals, is a genuine concern for others and the spirit of service.*

Till its birth, a baby was part of its mother's body. As soon as it is born, it becomes an individual in its own right. And the first education of the baby is the strengthening of its sense of *individuality,* the strengthening of the ego centred in its organic system. But soon it must be taken to the next stage of education, namely, *its growth from an individual to a person.* When the next child comes, it must be able to *consciously participate* in its life, to use the phrase of Julian Huxley. It must learn to love it and be loved by it. Otherwise, it will only collide with that second child, like a billiard ball. The child, therefore, needs to be initiated into that second significant stage of education; this is man's ethical and spiritual education, which puts the child on the long road of psychosocial evolution, with love and service as its nourishment, and which finds its consummation, after experiencing, in the context of the ups and downs of life, various heights of social excellences and delights on the way, in what Vedānta calls *sarvātma-bhāva,* spiritual oneness with all, and a life of what the *Gītā* calls *samadarśitva* and *sarva-bhūta hita,* or what Vivekananda calls 'eternal love and service free'. Sings the *Gītā* (13.28):

Samaṁ paśyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam īśvaram;
Na hinasty ātmanātmānaṁ tato yāti parāṁ gatim—

'Seeing the same Lord existing equally in all (as their one Self), one does not injure the self by the self, and thus goes to the highest goal.'

23. *Psycho-social Evolution as Spiritual Growth*

This is the evolution of man that education must sponsor and stimulate, whether within the family circle, in the educational institutions, or in the wider world of society. The watchword of that education will be the ethical and spiritual *growth* of man. As we put the child on the road of *physical growth* through *diet and exercise*, for which we have today an efficient science of nutrition and health care, as we put the child, similarly, on the road of *mental growth* through intellectual nourishment, for which we have increasing provision in our expanding educational and research institutions and facilities, we need also to put every child on the road of its *spiritual growth* through appropriate *ethical nourishment*, for which we need to initiate it into the self-discipline of its inner life and train it to avail of every opportunity to practise active concern for other beings and do all work in a spirit of service, followed, in due course, by the higher reaches of that self-discipline, namely, inward meditation on the one Self of all: *mām anusmara, yuddhya ca* 'meditate on Me, and fight the battle of your life', as expressed by *Bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (8.7).

Mere intellectual growth, unaccompanied by this ethical growth, makes only for the fattening of man's ego, of his raw 'I'. Such an education tends to make him *clever* but not *wise*, a prey to tensions and sorrows, and may lead him as much to rascality, on the one side, as to frustration and unfulfilment, on the other. By sharpening his intellect without at the same time expanding his heart in love and compassion, that intellect tends increasingly to scorn all values except self-interest, and ends up in the stagnation of cynicism, which registers the spiritual death of man. This is more serious than physical death for one so high in the scale of evolution as man. This is the prevailing mood of modern civilization, especially of its intellectuals. It is a disease more deadly than cholera or smallpox, malaria or leprosy. This is the main weakness of education in the modern world, arising out of its lack of insight into the spiritual dimension of the human personality and consequent emphasis only on organic satisfactions and organic survival, which goals even physical science, in its twentieth-century biology, as we have seen, apart from the higher world-religions, treats as unworthy of man and relegates to the pre—human stage of evolution.

It is here that education and religion blend into a single man *making process*, the earlier and the later phases of the single discipline of human growth, development, and fulfilment. The Indian spiritual tradition does not identify religion with mere profession of creeds and dogmas or performance of rituals and ceremonies; neither does it equate it with scholarship. Religious scholarship is only knowledge *about* religion; but religion itself is *experience,* it is spiritual growth, development and realization. *Atma vā are draṣṭavyaḥ*—'The Atman has to be realized', says Yājñavalkya to his wife, Maitreyi, in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (iv.v6). The central theme of religion and its key words are, therefore, the same as in education, namely *nourishment* and *growth,* the spiritual growth of the human personality through spiritual nourishment. No formalism or creed or dogma can do this for man.

24. *Static Piety versus Dynamic Spirituality*

The difference between these and true religion is beautifully expressed by Sri Ramakrishna in one of his sayings: Some have heard of milk, some have seen it, some have touched it, and some have drunk and digested it. The last group alone has benefited from the milk.

It is here that we see our failure in the field of religion during the past few centuries, as we are seeing our failure now in the field of education. A great verse compares all the Upaniṣads to a cow, Arjuna to its calf, Sri Kṛṣṇa to its milkman, the *Gītā* to the milk drawn, and the good people of the world to those for whom the milk is meant:

Sarvopaniṣudo gāvo, dogdhā gopālanandanaḥ;
Pārtho vatsaḥ suddhīh bhoktā, dugdhaṁ gītāmṛtaṁ mahat.

It is obvious that we were very religious; we are so, even now. But it is also obvious that we merely heard about the *Gītā,* saw it, touched it, and shouted about it; but we did not care to drink it and get nourished by it. Our spiritual malnutrition is obvious in our socio-political failures of the past few centuries. Religion must stand the test of verification like any other science; a tree is to be judged by its fruits; the fruit of religion is spirituality, expressed as character and efficiency, love and service. What we sought and got from religion was not the quiet strength of this spirituality but the fuzzy weakness of a static piety, of a piety-fringed worldliness, which became increasingly noisy and showy, self-centred and other-worldly, as centuries rolled on. Human capacity to identify pressing human problems and find solutions for them, and thereby enhance human life and dignity, became steadily eroded. The minority of the truly spiritual withdrew from society. The gulf between life in the world and life of religion, between worldly piety and other-worldly spirituality, became widened, in spite of the express teachings of the *Gītā* about the spirituality of life itself, resulting in the impoverishment and weakening of both life and religion.

The lure of the other-worldly led to the neglect of social ethics and of work-efficiency and team-spirit. The *Gītā's* express teaching that all mystical heights of spirituality should be based on the spirituality of ethical sense, that saint-hood, to be genuine, should be built on the foundation of man-hood, was not understood and heeded; and there was a general rush to achieve sainthood. But since it is a difficult venture, it became increasingly diluted and cheapened through a plethora of superstitious beliefs and practices—magical and misty—and this is not merely by the ignorant and the ordinary people, but even by the learned and the uncommon sections of the population—by crowds of our pandits or intellectuals, princes, and business magnates.

The anatomy of such general failure in the field of our religion has been explained by Saṅkarācārya in his comment on Srī Kṛṣna's statement in the fourth chapter of the *Gītā* that 'this great yoga, the science of practical spirituality, which was lost in the course of long ages, is now being taught by me to you, O Arjuna, because you are dear to me and a friend.' How was this science of yoga lost? asks Saṅkara, and answers: *durbalān ajitendriyān prāpya,* by falling into the hands of weaklings and men and women bereft of self-discipline. And our history subsequent to Saṅkara (ninth century A.D.) shows that by exclusively pursuing sainthood without the prior achievement of manhood, we as a nation lost both sainthood and manhood, and gained only a measure of hypocrisy in the bargain. In the field of religion, we got a static fuzzy piety, while in the wider field of life, we got laziness, inefficiency, and a pervasive unconcern for other human beings. This extracted a heavy price from all our people, both low and high, in the form of slavery and humiliation for a few centuries.

The inadequacies and failures of our piety-fringed worldliness, miscalled religion, are strikingly brought out by Sri Ramakrishna in one of his parables:

> A party of drunkards went to a drinking booth one night and had a good drink. Being a beautiful moonlit night and, finding a lake nearby and a boat tethered on its shore, they decided to enjoy a bit of boating. They went to the lake, got into the boat, and immediately started rowing enthusiastically. They rowed the whole night. When morning dawned, by which time the intoxication of the drink had worn off, they discovered to their utter dismay that they had not progressed one inch; for, they had not cared to lift the anchor before starting their vigorous rowing!

25. *Vivekananda's Philosophy of Man-making Education and Religion*

It is this mixed legacy of the past—philosophically and sprritually inspiring but socially and economically depressing—that has come to our nation in the modern age as a challenge. And it was our supreme good fortune that we got an outstanding teacher in Swami Vivekananda to guide us not of the welter of the modern transition; he exhorted us to face the challenge of life's complex problems with the challenge of a fearless and robust philosophy—*the philosophy of man-making education and man-making religion.* About him and his message, great leaders of thought, Indian and Western, have expressed their high appreciation. 'If you want to understand India', said Rabindranath Tagore to Romain Rolland, 'study Vivekananda. In him, everything is positive and nothing negative.' The impact of his thought is not confined to India. During my second visit to Indonesia to participate in its Vivekananda Centenary celebrations in 1963-64, President Sukarno of Indonesia released a book of selections entitled. *Sayings of Vivekananda* in English and *Svara Vivekananda* in Indonesian, in the Foreword to which he had written:

> 'Swami Vivekananda! What a name! He was one of those who gave so much inspiration to me—inspiration to be strong, inspiration to be a servant of God, inspiration to be a servant of my country, inspiration to be a servant of the poor, inspiration to be a servant of mankind.'
>
> 'He it was who said: "We have wept long enough; no more weeping, but stand on your feet and be men!" Yours, Soekarno'.

When I went to address the Teachers' Training College of the Bandung University, West Java, and asked the audience, consisting mostly of Muslim students, on what subject they would like me to speak, they said in chorus: speak to us on Swami Vivekananda's ideas on Education. And while taking leave of them after the lecture and the stimulating question-answer session, they said enthusiastically: Please come again and stay with us for a month at least to expound to us Swami Vivekananda's ideas on education.

I have found great interest among students in America and elsewhere in the philosophy and spirituality of Vedānta. They have mastered scientific knowledge, wealth and power; Yet they would sit for hours together to listen to this message of eternal India. They are eager to know whether man has a higher spiritual dimension over and above his physical and organic dimension and, if there is, how to realize it. This is the index of the growing spiritual hunger in the modern world. India has the know-how of this hunger and the technique of its satisfaction. But we have to build up a healthy body-politic to be able to appreciate its spiritual heights for ourselves and share it with the waiting world. Vivekananda has impressed this upon us in one of his luminous letters written from America in 1894 (*Complete Works*, Vol. V, p.43):

> 'The whole world requires light. It is expectant! India alone has that light, not in magic, mummeries, and charlantanism, but in the teachings of the glories of the spirit of real religion—of the highest spiritual truth. That is why the Lord has preserved the race through all its vicissitudes unto the present day. Now the time has come.'

26. *Conclusion*

The sovereign, democratic, republican state which we established in India in 1950 is a unique political institution in our five-thousand-year history. All our earlier states had derived their strength and sanction from kings or emperors or military leaders. But our state today derives its strength and sanction from 'We, the People of India' as our Constitution proudly proclaims. In such a context, the strength of the state is directly proportional to the strength of the people. And such strength of the people is the product of a strengthening, broadening, and elevating philosophy which will educate our people in faith in oneself and in each other, in clear thinking and practical efficiency, in the democratic outlook, in place of the erstwhile feudal one, and in a dynamic mood of service in place of the erstwhile mood of exploitation or apathy. The general absence of this spirit of service in our people in the various fields of life, especially in the various branches of the government, central and state, is a glaring weakness which contrasts with the prevailing mood of 'What can I do for you, how can I help you' met with in all Western countries. We badly need to increase our work-efficiency from its low thirty per cent level to full cent per cent level, and to learn to talk less and work more and to work in team-spirit. We talk while at work, we talk while at worship in our temples, and we do cross-talk at lectures and concerts. We are a highly emotional people which is an asset as well as a liability. For lack of self-discipline and social concern, we have wasted this precious human resource largely in self-cancelling ways, in frenzied talk and action, and in litigation, which has become our second nature, in our worldly life, and in the narrowest expression in the field of our religious life. Swami Vivekananda defines efficiency as the product of 'emotion controlled and directed to work.' Śrī Kṛṣṇa defines his message of yoga in the second chapter of the *Gītā* as: *karmasu kauśalam*—'efficiency in action', and *samatvam,* 'equanimity'.

These are the fruits of what Vivekananda calls Practical Vedānta. 'Men, men, these are wanted; a hundred such, and the world becomes revolutionized', says this great teacher of man-making. He bids you all today to 'arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached!'

My love and good wishes go to all of you who have received their degrees today; my love and good wishes go also to those among you who failed to pass and obtain degrees; try again and you will succeed. My good wishes to all of you present here, and to the university under whose auspices we have met here.

16

GURU NANAK AND SPIRITUAL VALUES IN EDUCATION*

1. *Introduction*

I HAVE come here all the long way from Calcutta to join with you in the joyous celebration of the first anniversary of the foundation of your university, attracted by the name of Guru Nānak attached to your institution. I am thankful to Sri Bishan Singh Samundri, your Vice-Chancellor, for extending to me this invitation. We did not know each other personally; but the invisible bond of Guru Nānak seems to have drawn me to him and through him to your university.

2. *Vivekananda on the Glory of the Punjab*

I have been drawn to the spiritual beauty and charm of the personalities of Guru Nānak and Guru Gobind Singh from my very young days even from far off Kerala. That attraction became deepened when I later joined the Ramakrishna Order and learnt to view them through the literature of Swami Vivekananda. Responding to the enthusiastic welcome extended to him by the citizens of Lahore in November 1897, Swami Vivekananda addressed three crowded meetings in the city. He began his first lecture, held in the courtyard of Raja Dhyan Singh's palace and on the subject of 'The Common Bases of Hinduism', with a tribute to the land of the five rivers, the Punjab, for its great contribution to the shaping of the history, culture, and thought of our sub-continent. (*Complete Works*, Vol. III, p. 366, 1963 Edition):

> This is the land which is held to be the holiest even in holy Āryāvarta; this is the Brahmāvarta of which our great Manu speaks. This is the land from whence arose that mighty aspiration after the Spirit, ay, which in times to come, as history shows, is to deluge the world. This is the land where, like its mighty rivers, spiritual aspirations have arisen and joined their strength, till they travelled over the length and breadth of the world and declared themselves with a voice of thunder. This is the land which had

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* First Foundation-Day Address at Guru Nānak University Amritsar, Punjab, on 24 November 1970

first to bear the brunt of all inroads and invasions into India; this heroic land had first to bare its bosom to every onslaught of the outer barbarians into Āryāvarta. **This is the land which, after all its sufferings, has not yet entirely lost its glory and its strength. Here it was that, in later times, the gentle** Nānak **preached his marvellous love for the world. Here it was that his broad heart was opened and his arms outstretched to embrace the whole world, not only of Hindus, but of Mohammedans too. Here it was that one of the last and one of the most glorious heroes of our race, Guru Gobind Singh, after shedding his blood and that of his nearest and dearest for the cause of religion even when deserted by those for whom this blood was shed, retired into the South to die like a wounded lion struck to the heart, without a word against his country, without a single word of murmur.'**

3. *Bitter Fruits of Our Higher Education Narrowly Conceived*

This university forms a link in the vast network of modern higher education in India, constituted of about eightysix universities, most of which were established during the twentytwo years of our post-independence period. The contribution of these universities to the identification and solving of our many national problems, we have to confess, has been very limited. True, they have turned out a large number of graduates and Ph. Ds to run our ever-expanding modern administrative, industrial, and professional machinery. Out of them have also come a few trained minds and sensitive hearts who have been the creative agents for the nation's steady development and progress. But compared to the enormous financial investment of the nation on its higher education, the nation has received only marginal returns; and even this has been a diminishing value since the first few years after independence. *It is becoming increasingly clear that our education has not been properly integrated with our national purposes and goals,* apart from its planning requirements of so many social functionaries, such as engineers, doctors, research scientists etc., per year. This is obviously a too narrowly conceived aim of education, of costly education, for a nation such as ours, which is passing through the most revolutionary transition in its long five-thousand-year history.

It is in this context, against this background, that I welcome, and appreciate the significance of, the association of the name of Guru Nānak with this new university of ours. And it will be my endeavour, in the course of this address, to discuss the importance and relevance of this association. Such an association is bound to appear to many a patriot among us as a retrograde medieval step not in tune with our national purposes and goals,as it may also be viewed approvingly by some sections among us as conducive to what they consider to be their sectional interest and welfare.

As centres of higher education, our universities have failed to function as the free clearing house of thought and ideas for our free nation. In a period of revolutionary transition, the nation needs the services of thousands of forward-looking creative minds who will become effective agents of social change. It needs batches and batches *of trained minds,* and *not stuffed brains;* patriots endowed with the spirit of dedication and service, and not mere job-hunters and careerists; in short, men and women *trained in the double efficiency of the energy of knowledge and the energy of character*. And every free nation looks to its education as the one source for meeting this vital need.

We have to confess that our education in general, and our universities in particular, have failed our nation in this respect. They largely turn out thousands of static minds, often backward-looking, and not creative spirits, free and forward-looking; they also turn out batches and batches of stuffed brains instead of trained minds, as also many job-hunters and careerists, but very few patriots of dedication and service. These have made our education incapable of contributing the twin efficiencies of trained intelligence and steady character expected of it by the nation.

These weaknesses are reflected in all the problems that plague our society today, not only in bribery and corruption and other social malpractices, but also in our narrow and fissiparous political tendencies and exclusive regional loyalties, in our low rate of economic growth, in the selfishness and cynicism of much of our intelligentsia, in our pervasive social unconcern, and in our administrative unresponsiveness and inefficiency at all levels. These are the bitter fruits of our higher education, narrowly conceived as the means only to money-making, comfort, power, and pleasure. *This is materialism in its crudest form, the tyranny of the sensate over the spirit of man.* It spells the death of the heroic element in human life. Since our independence, this is the tragedy of man that we enacted on a colossal scale in India. We failed to realize that to over-value money is to devalue man, and to devalue man is to devalue also that money in turn. Since independence, we continued to devalue man in India, until we were compelled, by runaway circumstances, to devalue our rupee also.

4. *Materialism: Modern Western Versus Modern Indian*

How shall we eliminate this tragedy from our nation and restore man to his dignity and glory? In a general sense, this is not just a national problem today; it is international; it is universal. Modern Western civilization derives sustenance from a philosophy of man which sees him only in his physical and organic dimension. It has no insight into the spiritual depths of his personality. Hence it stresses organic satisfactions as the goal of human life; and an efficient technology provides these to him in ever-increasing measure. This over-emphasis on the physical and the material, on the three p's of profit, power, and pleasure, and the consequent malnutrition of the spiritual dimensions of his personality, have resulted in modern man and modern society, in India as much as elsewhere, becoming, in spite of vast knowledge and material wealth, a prey to various tensions and general unfulfilment and to various explosions such as sex and crime, alcoholism and drug.

But we should not fail to note that there is a vital difference between Western materialism and post-freedom Indian materialism. In spite of this over-emphasis on the physical and the material, man in the West has been able to achieve a measure of ethical awareness and personal and social efficiency, a capacity for personal renunciation in the service of public good, and a capacity for team work, by which he has raised his collective human life from wretchedness to high levels of social security and welfare. India's philosophy of man, obtaining in the Vedānta, detects therein the beginnings of man's spiritual growth, the early stages of the manifestation of the spiritual dimension of his personality.

It is amazing that *we in India failed, in our post-independence plunge into materialism and worldliness, to develop these saving virtues and graces of the materialism of the West.* We lived and functioned, and we still do so, under the dictum: I and mine, and the devil take the hindmost. The enlightened self-interest of the Western man became denuded, in the case of most of us in India, of the element of enlightenment, and became sheer self-interest. This **spiritual poverty is writ large in the moods and ways of most of our** educated section, and more especially of our administrators and industrialists, politicians and men of the professions, and what is the saddest of all, of the members of our educational services as well.

5. *India to go after the Roots of Western Greatness and Not merely the Fruits of Western Greatness*

It is time that we take energetic steps to infuse ethical and spiritual values into our education, so that our nation may regain its spiritual health even while it is engaged in the struggle to become a progressive, materially advanced, modern society. This is the only way to make it **a scientific and humanistic and *truly modern* society, and** not just *modernistic* in the cheap sense. The former is the product of our *assimilation* of the *root* of Western greatness, namely, scientific spirit and technical efficiency, social concern and character-efficiency, while the latter is the product of our *imitating* and running after the *fruits* of Western greatness, namely, the gadgets of its technology and the comfort and pleasure it yields.

True greatness cannot come to us by becoming modernistic in that cheap sense. If that is taken as the test of progress, then some of the animals in the Delhi Zoo, which have been provided with air-conditioned accommodation and other gadgets of the fruits of modern technology, are more modern than most human beings in India! But we know that, in spite of such facilities, they are yet animals only. *The truly modern is made of sterner stuff;* it denotes the modern mind and outlook and temper. And this is dynamic and a force for progress.

6. *Vivekananda on Education*

This is the type of modern humanity that Swami Vivekananda desired modern India to develop; his educational message had this end in view. It was a message of man-making and nation-building. It has the power to galvanize our education today and, through that, our national life as well. Says Romain Rolland about Vivekananda's utterances *(The Life of Vivekananda.* p. 146, 5th Edition):

> His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms

like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his ... without getting a thrill through my body as of an electric shock.'

Introducing a small book on *Education*, consisting of Vivekananda's utterances on the subject collected from the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* in eight volumes, and published by the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore, Mahatma Gandhi says:

> 'Surely, Swami Vivekananda's writings need no introduction from anybody They make their own irresistible appeal.'

A few passages from this book will help us to experience that thrill as of an electric shock, as remarked by Rolland, or 'their own irresistible appeal', as observed by Gandhiji (pp. 1-8):

> 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man .
>
> 'Knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside. We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is only the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth.
>
> 'All knowledge, therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases, it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say, "we are learning"; and the advance of knowledge is made by the advance of this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is the more knowing man; the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant; the man from whom it has entirely gone is all-knowing, omniscient. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out.
>
> 'Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-building assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. If education were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopaedias the *ṛṣis*.
>
> 'Getting by heart the thought of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated. Is this education? What is the goal of your education? Either a clerkship or being a lawyer, or at the most a Deputy Magistrate, which is another form of clerkship—isn't that all? What good will it do you or the country at large? Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bhārata, proverbial for its food.

Will your education fulfil this want? The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name'?

'We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet. What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day.

'The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training, by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face. It is man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want.'

7. *Modern India Emerging from Victim of History to Creator of History*

After centuries of political subjection and social stagnation, our country is now free and is engaged in an all-round national reconstruction programme of gigantic proportions. During the past seven or eight centuries, we had become static and uncreative, when we had also to face tremendous external and internal pressures. We did throw up during those centuries a few creative minds in politics and society, religion and art, and some dynamic movements inspired by them. These helped us to survive that dark period of tyranny and oppression. But only just to survive; the nation as a whole lay stagnant, with its creative spirit at its lowest ebb. And we succumbed finally to the British onslaught. An ancient and most populous nation resigned itself to becoming a 'ward' of a small group of, to use the phrase of *The Men Who Ruled India* by Philip Woodroff, British 'guardians' for a century and a half. Those seven or eight centuries were the period when our country became, after being a *creator* of history for a few thousand years, a *victim* of history. Other nations created history and we became its victims.

That dark period is now over. The appearance of a galaxy of creative personalities like Ram Mohan Roy and Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi, in the last and this centuries, has made modern India a centre of vast creative energies whose scope of impact is not only nation-wide but also international. Our education will capture a sense of purpose and direction, and through it an energy and dynamism, only when it relates itself to that creative and dynamic modern Indian background, on the one side, and to the mounting urges and aspirations of the millions and millions of our long-suppressed fellow-citizens, on the other. Our political freedom has no meaning except as the means for the satisfaction of these urges and aspirations of our people. Every student in our schools and colleges and universities today must be made aware of this social context of his education, must be inspired to be an instrument of the nation to fulfil these urges and aspirations of his people, and must be guided to assimilate his knowledge and experience into the energy of character, dedication, and work-efficiency. This is fundamental basic education in the true sense; learning a subject, and getting a degree in it, and getting established in a job, is only secondary to this. By orienting our education in this way, our educational institutions will become what they are intended to be, namely, the source of light and strength to the nation, by turning out batches and batches of youths with trained minds and not stuffed brains. Such youths will be imbued with the ethical and spiritual values of dedication and service. *They will reveal in their life and work a new spiritual beauty and strength lying imbedded in the human personality.*

8. *Vivekananda's Concept of Educational 'Treason'*

It is the absence of this in the products of our post-independence education that makes the education so dismal and so unrelated to national purposes and goals. It has been largely turning out *not citizens* but *traitors* in a special sense, as expressed by Swami Vivekananda. We know one type of treason, namely, political treason, which means working against one's state in the interests of a foreign state. This type of treason is a rare occurrence in any nation. But it is urgent that we in India take note of another type of treason about which Vivekananda spoke, the educational treason, and which our people have committed for centuries and which we have been specially committing on a large scale since our independence. In a letter written from USA in 1894 to a young worker in India, Swami Vivekananda said (*Complete Works*, Volume V, p.58, Eighth Edition):

> 'So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a *traitor* who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.'

Modern education is a costly undertaking. To turn out a science or an arts graduate, it costs the state about Rs. 20,000; it is fourfold in the case of an engineer or a doctor. The fees paid by a student will cover only a fraction of this expense. The rest is met by the state, which means, by the people other than the student concerned.

Having got all this costly education at the cost of his people, if a student fails to pay his or her debt to the people by serving them through his knowledge and talent, through converting his bread-winning and money-making endeavours and his job into an opportunity for service, if he or she, becoming selfish and self-centred, cares only for his or her own profit and pleasure, he or she commits the most serious treason, says Vivekananda.

Bereft of the larger social motivation, such people become not dynamic personalities but static individuals, ever grumbling and complaining that the state has not done this or that benefit to them, and ever tending accordingly to gravitate to the anti-social group indulging in corruption and other social malpractices, thereby increasing its number and imperilling the spiritual health of the nation. Vivekananda refers to this treason as our long-continued national sin (*Vivekananda: His Call to the Nation*, p.86):

> 'I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail, until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples but in return, they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them.

9. *Freedom: the One Condition of Human Growth*

The remedy for this lies in inspiring our education with ethical and spiritual values. This does not mean imposing or adopting a set of do's and don'ts of any of the moral or religious codes. Do's and don'ts imposed externally have a value for man when he is a child; in fact, his very physical survival at that stage depends upon that. But it becomes a cramping strait-jacket for an adolescent and still more so for an adult. By confining men and women to such moral strait-jackets, we distort their personalities by destroying their moral initiative. Our society has committed this blunder for centuries. We tied man down by bundles of do's and don'ts, more don'ts than do's, operative on him for all the twentyfour hours of the day; and we continued this for centuries. Our national character bears the dismal imprint of this blunder in our general lack of initiative, in our unwillingness to face problems ourselves, and to delegate responsibility to our colleagues, in our incapacity to think and take decisions independently, and to face their consequences fearlessly. It is also reflected in the texture of our personalities, which is more often a bundle of static negative traits than of dynamic positive virtues. With these equipments, we cannot hope to generate that energy of character which alone can solve the mounting problems of our people.

Freedom is the first condition of human growth, proclaims Swami Vivekananda. And freedom implies freedom even to commit mistakes. It is through mistakes and failures that the human spirit forges ahead in the building of a steady character for himself and the working out of a high destiny for his people. Life under externally imposed laws and regulations, indulged in beyond a certain measure, becomes *mechanically correct* but *spiritually sterile*. While escaping the strains of mistakes and failures, it misses also the spiritual joys of free functioning and personality growth. A railway train moves strictly according to the track laid for it; it has no spiritual growth as well. *Man alone has the freedom and capacity to move according to nature's tracks, deviate from them by the free exercise of his will and choice, commit blunders on his way, correct himself, and grow in the process into a warm, rich, spiritual personality, with the capacity for entering into, and being entered into by, other human beings in society, in love and concern, dedication and service.* This is man's spiritual growth; this registers the specific advance of evolution at the human stage; it is the fruit of assimilation of ethical and spiritual values by him.

10. *Psycho-social Evolution as Spiritual Growth*

This is psycho-social evolution, according to twentieth-century biology. Nineteenth-century biology could not find any rational basis for ethical behaviour in its theory of evolution. Evolution and ethics ran parallel courses. As expressed by Thomas Huxley, the distinguished collaborator of Darwin, in his *Evolution and Ethics,* evolution meant struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, whereas ethics meant the making of as many as possible fit to survive. But the revolutionary developments in this science of biology since Darwin have led to the recognition of the uniqueness of man in evolution, and of ethics as central to this phase of evolution. Says Sir Julian Huxley in his lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision' (*Evolution After Darwin*, Volume III, p.251):

> 'Man's evolution is not biological, but psycho-social; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by breakthroughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological organization.'

Presenting, in the light of this new concept of *psycho-social evolution* relevant at the human stage, the aim of this human phase of evolution as 'greater fulfilment', Julian Huxley says (*ibid.*, Vol.II, p.20):

> 'In the light of our present knowledge, man's most comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of organization, or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment—the fuller realization of more possibilities by human species collectively and more of its component members individually.'

And pleading for a scientific study of the scope of this concept of 'fulfilment', Huxley concludes (*ibid.*, p.21):

> 'Once greater fulfilment is recognized as man's ultimate or dominant aim, we shall need a science of human possibilities to help guide the long course of psycho-social evolution that lies ahead.'

It is this science, the science of human possibilities, that India's great philosophy, Vedānta, discovers at the core of every one of the world's great religions; it is the central theme of the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*, of Buddha and Guru Nānak, of Sri Ramakrishna and

Swami Vivekananda. This is *adhyātma-vidyā,* the science of spirituality, which discovers, through a penetrating study of the depth of the human personality, the innate divinity of man, his spiritual oneness with all beings, and the technique by which this divinity can be manifested in life and action. Swami Vivekananda, accordingly, defines religion as 'the manifestation of the divinity already in man'. All ethical sense and aesthetic sensibility, all expressions of love and compassion, and all moods and acts of service and dedication, only indicate this manifestation of man's innate divine nature in varying degrees. They are the spontaneous by-products of man's spiritual growth above his organic limitations. This is the meaning of the saying of religion that man is a child of God. The kingdom of Heaven is within us, assures Jesus. As our *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* first proclaimed it (III.12):

Eṣa sarveṣu bhūteṣu gūḍho ātmā na prakāśate;
Dṛśyate tu agryayā buddhyā sūkṣmayā sūkṣma-darśibhiḥ—

'This Ātman is present in every being; but being hidden, it is not manifested. It can, however, be realized by the subtle and one-pointed *buddhi* or pure reason of those who train themselves to see subtler and subtler truths.'

This is the science of *brahma-vidyā* or *adhyātma-vidyā,* the science of God and soul, of God in the soul of all beings, and ever present in the heart of all nature, the higher dimension of what Julian Huxley calls 'the science of human possibilities', that needs to find its rightful place in all education, side by side with the more familiar modern science, namely, the science of physical nature in its various departments and their technological possibilities.

11. *Need to Combine Physical Science with Spirituality*

The conjunction of these two sciences can alone ensure total human fulfilment. The older civilizations relied entirely on religion; their achievements were limited. Modern Western civilization relies entirely on physical science; its achievements also are inadequate and partial. If one failed earlier to solve the problem of the physical ailments of man and his material poverty and distress, the other is revealing its helplessness today to solve the problem of the mental ailments of man and his inner poverty in the midst of external material affluence. Physical science can denature plutonium, but it cannot denature evil in the heart of man, confesses

Einstein. It can sharpen his organic appetites and provide him with an ever-increasing range and quantity of consumer goods and gadgets to satisfy those appetites; but it cannot even conceive the need, much less offer concrete help to man, to check his impulses to indulge in lust and greed, drink and drug, violence and destruction, and even suicide. And these are the main sources of human unfulfilment today, individual and collective. For the knowledge and technical know-how of dealing with these sources of his inner discord, modern man has to turn for help to religion, *to the science of the spiritual nature of man*. It is this science of spirituality that can provide modern man with that science of human possibilities to help guide the long course of psycho-social evolution that lies ahead, as demanded by Julian Huxley in the passage quoted earlier. This is the faith and hope of several modern thinkers, including outstanding physical scientists. It finds the clearest expression in the testament of the great astrophysicist R. A. Millikan at the conclusion of his *Autobiography:*

> 'It seems to me that the two great Pillars upon which all human well-being and human progress rest are, first, the spirit of religion, and second, the spirit of science—or knowledge. Neither can attain its largest effectiveness without support from the other. To promote the latter, we have universities and research institutions. But the supreme opportunity for everyone, with no exception, lies in the first.'

That such scientists mean by 'religion' a seeking and a finding, and not a creed or a dogma, and thus partaking of the scientific spirit, is clearly brought out by the eminent physicist Sir Arthur Eddington (*Science and the Unseen World,* p.54):

> 'You will understand the true spirit neither of science nor of religion unless seeking is placed in the forefront.'

Psycho-social evolution betokens the spirit of man breaking the shackles and limitations of the ego that is centred in his organic individuality, which makes for self-centredness and exploitation, and growing and expanding in his spiritual dimension, which makes for unselfishness, love, and service. Through psycho-social evolution, individuality expands into personality. Individuality that is centred in the ego and under the control of the organic system is compared by the late Bertrand Russell to a billiard ball. The only relationship that such an individual can have with similar other individuals is what obtains, says Russell, between one billiard ball and another billiard ball, namely; collision. A billiard ball cannot enter into another billiard ball. But man has to, and he has also the organic capacity to enter into, other human beings in society in love and mutual concern in order to achieve fulfilment. This is his ethical and spiritual growth, by which he transcends his limited organism-centred ego, which twentieth-century biology treats only as 'one of Nature's methods, a convenient provisional delusion of considerable strategic value' (*The Science of Life,* by H. G. Wells, G.P. Wells, and Julian Huxley, p.878).

And by such spiritual growth, man manifests, by stages, his true self which is the Self of all. When this growth sets in, individuality grows into personality. Julian Huxley defines persons and personality thus (*Introduction* to *The Phenomenon of Man* by Teilhard de Chardin, p.20):

> 'Persons are individuals who transcend their organic individuality in conscious (social) participation.'

This is the importance of society in the spiritual education of man: and that education is meant to put him on the high road of his psycho-social evolution, which now takes the place of organic evolution, in view of nature perfecting in him an organ, namely, the cerebral system, with the aid of which he can invent more quickly any organs which he may need than what nature can evolve for him through her slow and wasteful evolutionary methods.

12. *Criterion of Human Evolution: Quality versus Quantity*

All such spiritual growth through psycho-social evolution discloses the impact of two values on his personality, namely *tyaga* and *seva,* renunciation and service. It is, negatively, renunciation of his little self, the puny ego tethered to his organic individuality, and it is, positively, manifestation of the Ātman, his infinite Self, which is the Self of all, and the attitude and acts of service as the royal channel of that manifestation. It was the absence of this spiritual growth of man above his organic limitation, and consequent incapacity to subordinate individual and group interests to national good, and the sad conversion of the science of religion into a static piety, that weakened Indian society and made it a prey to succe foreign invasions and national humiliations. The nation today must ensure for itself this spiritual and ethical value of *tyāga* and *seva*. Drawing our attention to this truth, Vivekananda says (*Vivekananda: His call to the Nation,* p. 79):

> 'Can you adduce any reason why India should lie in the ebb-tide of the Aryan nations? Is she inferior in intellect? Is she inferior in dexterity? Can you look at her art, at her mathematics, at her philosophy, and answer 'yes'? All that is needed is that she should de-hypnotize herself and wake up from her age-long sleep to take her true rank in the hierarchy of nations. The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels, the rest will take care of itself.'

These are eternal values—*sanātana dharmas*—which are behind every qualitative improvement of human life. Every such qualitative advance progressively reveals the beauty imbedded in the heart of life, while, at the same time, taking life beyond the thraldom to the organic and the sensate into the freedom of the spiritual.

Quantity is the criterion of evolution at the pre-human stage, while at the human stage, quality replaces quantity as the dominant criterion, according to twentieth-century biology. Says Sir Julian Huxley (*Evolution After Darwin,* Volume I. p. 17):

> 'Man is therefore of immense significance. He is a reminder of the existence here and there, in the quantitative vastness of cosmic matter and its energy equivalents, of a trend towards mind, with its accompaniment of quality and richness of existence—and, what is more, a proof of the importance of mind and quality in the all-embracing evolutionary process.'

Again (*ibid.*, Volume III. p. 257):

> 'I spoke of quality. This must be the dominant concept of our new belief-system—quality and richness as against quantity and uniformity'.

And. discussing the place of material utility against this new belief-system, Huxley says (*ibid.*, p.259):

> 'Once we truly believe. ... that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only upto a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or T V sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary, but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, not an end in itself.

Quality is a value concept; and values are not material or mechanical. but spiritual. Revealing the post-war disillusionment about materialism. the late Bertrand Russell protestingly observes (*The Impact of Science on Society*. p. 77):

> 'The machine is the modern form of Satan and its worship is the modern diabolism. ... Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something no political philosopher must forget.'

The freedom of the human spirit is the most precious value thrown up by evolution, and its enhancement is the primary goal of all education and all religion, especially in a democracy. Material inducements and rewards play only an early and a minor part in the acquisition and enhancement of this value. 'More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or T V sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary but bad', protests the biologist Julian Huxley, as referred to above.

13. *Dynamic Spirituality versus Static Piety*

After a certain quantitative satisfaction, man must strive to raise his life to qualitative levels. If he fails to do so, biology warns him today, as religion has warned him always, he will stagnate at the physical or organic or sensate level. And stagnation means spiritual death. 'All expansion is life, all contraction is death', says Vivekananda. Stagnation at the sensate level is the disease of *saṁsāra* or worldliness, says Vedānta, as also all religious traditions of humanity, in a chorus. Sri Ramakrishna sums up the wisdom of these traditions in a brief utterance:

> 'Live in the world; there is no harm in that. But don't allow the world to live in you'

Where else shall we live except in the world? Even when God appears on earth as an incarnation, he also has to live in the world. But if *worldliness* enters into man, he stagnates at the organic level, his life-current becomes dammed up at a level, from which outlet channels ever lead back only to itself. This is the sign of the loss of creativity. It is worldliness, the fruits of which are evil: selfishness, meanness, exploitation, litigation, tension. Sri Ramakrishna then illumines this truth through an apt illustration:

> 'A boat will be on the water; that is the proper place for the boat. But water should not be in the boat; that is the wrong place for the water. It will make the boat stagnant, incapable of movement, unfit for the purpose for which it is meant'.

This is the message of a *dynamic spirituality* which India has received from her great spiritual teachers—from the sages of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, from Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā,* and from

Buddha and Saṅkara, of the past, from Guru Nānak and other saints, of the middle ages, and from Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, of our own time. This is far different from the *static piety* which passes for much of religion, whether among Hindus or Sikhs, Muslims or Christians. That piety has been a socially divisive force and very deficient in character-fruits, simply because it has been spiritually poor and bereft of that nourishment that makes for spiritual growth. It makes up for this inward spiritual poverty by excessive outward ostentation and fuzziness. Sri Ramakrishna illustrates the spiritual ineffectiveness of all such static piety by a parable:

> One moonlit night, a party of drunkards went to a bar and had a good drink. Afterwards, seeing a boat tethered in a lake nearby, they decided to enjoy a boat trip in that moonlight. They rushed to the lake, got into the boat, and immediately started rowing vigorously, and continued this throughout the night. When morning dawned and the effect of the drink had worn off, they were surprised to find that they had not progressed one inch from the shore. For, in their intoxication, they had forgotten to lift the anchor before starting their rowing!

It is not the science of religion, the science and art of man's spiritual growth and fulfilment, that one gets in all such piety, but a stagnant and divisive socio-political expression of religion, a static creed exclusive of other creeds, a worldly piety, or more aptly, a piety-fringed worldliness. Guru Nānak and all other spiritual teachers strove to release humanity from the shackles of such a piety and give it a strengthening spirituality. About all such static religion, Vivekananda says in a letter written from America in 1895 (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*. p. 211, Fourth Edition):

> 'My master used to say that these names as Hindu, Christian etc., stand as great bars to all brotherly feelings between man and man. We must try to break them down first. They have lost all their good powers and now only stand as baneful influences under whose black magic even the best of us behave like demons. Well, we will have to work hard and must succeed.'

14. *Human Growth: Its Three-fold Dimension*

Teachers like Guru Nānak are great educationists in religion: they do not come into the world to give man a bundle of creeds and dogmas, or a system of such piety-fringed worldliness and its evil fruits; they come to lift up humanity through their message of dynamic spirituality. The central theme of their message is, therefore, the spiritual growth of man or the growth of man in his spiritual dimension. Growth, and not brain-stuffing, is also the central théme of all true education, the growth of the child in his mental or intellectual dimension. *All true religion is education and all true education is growth.* Education and religion, accordingly, form the earlier and later stages of man's growth in his trans-organic or trans-physical dimension.

We are all familiar with the concepts of physical growth and intellectual growth. A baby at birth is about seven pounds in weight. Through the physical nourishment of food provided by its mother's milk to begin with, followed by other heavier foods later, we see the baby growing physically until it becomes a grown up and healthy man or woman of 75 or 100 kilos in weight. This is a palpable growth, a growth in the physical dimension of man. But the baby also grows in a second dimension, namely, the mental. From the moment of its birth, we can watch this growth through the mental nourishment of knowledge it receives from its mother, to begin with, then from other members of its family, followed by what it receives from its school and college teachers, and lastly from its own trained mind, until it becomes an intellectually mature adult with a firm grip on the world. This is man's growth in a second dimension, namely, the mental, over and above, but based on, his growth in the physical dimension. This is what the world calls education, in which the Indian tradition recognizes the mother as the first *guru* or educator of the child, followed by the father and the school and college teachers as its second and third *gurus* respectively. With the help of these three *gurus,* the child, now developed into an adult, gets the help of a fourth and final *guru* for himself, namely, his own trained mind, says the Indian tradition. In the illumining words of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (XI., 12. 20):

Ātmano guruḥ atmaiva puruṣasya viśeṣataḥ
Yat pratyakṣānumānābhyām śreyo' 'sau anuvindate—

'One's guru is oneself only, particularly in the case of man (unlike the sub-human species) because, through the application of (scientific methods) of direct observation of facts and inference based on them, he achieves his own welfare.'

Are these two the only dimensions of human growth, namely, the physical and the mental? Yes, says modern Western culture.

No. says ancient and modern Indian culture. And the view of Indian culture on this important subject is beginning to receive respectful and welcome attention from the great thinkers of Western culture today.

Over and above these two obvious dimensions of human growth, says Indian culture, there is a third dimension of human growth, namely, the spiritual. Though not so obvious as the other two, it is yet more significant, as it is man's specific and unique dimension of growth, in the absence of which, growth in the other two dimensions may as well become a gamble, may as well lead man not to his fulfilment but to his unfulfilment. This is becoming increasingly demonstrated in modern civilization itself, in which the tragedy of inner poverty and general unfulfilment stares man in the face, in the context of his unprecedented external wealth and knowledge and power. We are turning out, through modern secular education, intellectuals who tend to become cynical, who tend to scorn all values except money, power, and pleasure, men and women who are often intellectul giants but also moral pigmies. We witness today knowledge and material security going side by side with emotional instability and inner insecurity. Schopenhauer's warning of over a century ago is becoming tragically true today. (*The World as Will and Idea,* Volume I, p.404):

> 'Almost all men who are secure from want and care, now that they have at last thrown off all other burdens, become a burden to themselves.'

Behind the modern abundance of physical and mental nourishment, there lurks a vital malnutrition of some deeper level of the human personality. Neither Western physical sciences, nor its social sciences, have any insight into this unique dimension of human personality and the science and art of its nourishment and growth. This has been, on the other hand, India's field of specialization, in the interests of which she even neglected all her physical and social sciences, a neglect which became cruel in recent centuries, and for which she had to pay a heavy price in the form of centuries of foreign subjection and social stagnation. We are now engaged in rescuing ourselves from it by the assimilation of modern Western science and modern socio-political wisdom. We have already achieved some success in this; yet much remains to be done. To achieve this and achieve this fast enough, we need to blend, in our national character, the twin-energy resources of scientific efficiency and spiritual efficiency.

15. *Guru Nānak: A Union of Fearlessness with Gentleness*

Let us not, therefore, throw away or neglect, in the name of modernizing, our historically required science and technical know-how of this vital third dimension of human growth, namely, the science and art of man's spiritual nourishment and spiritual growth. This is the ancient, and yet the most modern and also the most progressive, ideology and force in the modern context, when there is increasing recognition of the dominance of the sciences of human nature over the sciences of physical nature. Love and service, gentleness and fearlessness, are eternal spiritual values and progressive ideologies and forces, compared with which hatred and exploitation, ferocity and cowardice are reactionary ideologies and forces. The spiritual teachers of the world embody and represent these progressive forces. *In teachers like Guru Nānak, we find the rare blending of two character-traits which generally exclude each other, namley, strength and gentleness, courage and meekness.* Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes this unique blending as one of the characteristics of a true devotee of God. (*Gītā*, XII. 15):

Yasmat no dvijatė loko, lokāt no'dvijate ca yaḥ—

'By whom the world is not frightened, and whom the world also does not frighten'

We more often see strength and fearlessness co-existing with violence and ferocity, aggressiveness and exploitation, while we see gentleness and meekness coexisting with fear and weakness, helplessness and dependence. *Guru Nānak represents the highest level of psycho-social evolution and spiritual growth, revealing a personality at once strong and gentle, fearless and compassionate, and yielding the character-fruits of universal love and service.* When a personality blends in itself strength with gentleness, it becomes a source of fearlessness to all others as well. The stability of democracy depends on its education turning out, in more or less degrees of attainment, more and more of such personalities. If our education aims at not only the gathering of knowledge but also the acquisition of character, it will be only true to itself if it opens itself up to the inspiration available from India's spiritual teachers like Guru Nānak. Such inspiration will not take our education or our political state away from the healthy aspects of our national secularism; but *it will thereby certainly make that secularism less crudely materialistic and worldly and more ethical and healthy,* by injecting into it the much-needed spiritual and ethical values and the motivation of dedication and service. This is what Vivekananda calls man-making, character-building, and nation-building education and religion.

16. *The Indian Gṛhastha to spiritually grow into the citizen*

Guru Nānak summons our people today to convert their life and work in the world, their knowledge-acquisition and breadwinning, into a fertile field for the cultivation of our spiritual growth, within, and general human welfare, outside. Bread-winning for oneself, on the one side, and welfare of society as a whole, on the other, and bread-winning and social welfare, on the one side, and cultivation of spirituality, on the other, are not two separate watertight compartments of life, as was thought by many in Guru Nānak's time, and as is thought by many even today. A *gṛhastha* or householder is not to remain confined to his biological and genetical family limitations in sympathy and interests, love and service. That is worldliness. In his search for social welfare and the delights of culture, and in his search for God who is the Self of all, he is to expand his self-awareness and his sympathy and interests to encompass those beyond his genetical relationship and to love them and serve them. By this, the *gṛhastha* achieves his *spiritual growth* into the citizen, into the free and responsible member of a free society.

17. *Tyāga and Seva*

Politics becomes a dismal pursuit of power for its own sake, at the dictate of the genetically limited ego, when it becomes divorced from the ethical element. It is in the citizen that the political constituent merges with the ethical constituent, to initiate the beginnings of man's spiritual growth, and to produce a free and responsible personality. In the citizen is revealed the political value of freedom and social responsibility becoming blended with the ethical value of *tyāga* and *seva,* renunciation and service. It is the renunciation of the genetically limited ego, making for the manifestation of the spiritually expansive self of man, and its expression in moods and acts of service. This is psycho-social evolution, the spiritual and ethical growth of man, side by side with his physical and mental growth. *Mām anusmara, yuddhya ca*– 'continually think of Me (the one God who is the innermost Self of all) and fight your battle of life', exhorts Śri Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (VIII-7).

Nām and seva, 'remembrance of God through His Name, and service' should go together, exhorts Guru Nānak, and convert society into a *saṅgat* or universal fellowship.

18. *Need to Discriminate between the Śruti and the Smṛti Elements in Every Tradition*

Spiritual growth begins as ethical growth which is effected by doing all work as service of society, motivated by a concern for other human beings; it develops into higher spiritual levels when one treats such service as worship, motivated by devotion to God who is the one Self in all. At this second stage, spiritual growth becomes accelerated by meditation on God within, with eyes closed, accompanied by worship and singing of divine Name without, with eyes open. Such worship may be individual and collective. These constitute the eternal *śruti* elements of the world's religious traditions, capable of suitable variations and adaptations in response to the need of individual natures, but all of them constituting the tested and verified technical know-how of dynamic spirituality.

The Guru does not ask us to confine our service to one's own sect only; that was a later development due to historical circumstances. Such limitation of human concern in a sect is the way of a creed-bound religion. But teachers like Nānak came not to tie man down to a creed or to a sect, but to free him from all bondages, through a liberating spiritual message. A merely political message may be narrow and exclusive in scope. But a truly spiritual and ethical message breaks down all barriers to neighbourliness and reaches out to the universal and human. Religion becomes a limited creed and sect, when it becomes dominated by the political element. This is what we call in India communalism, permissible under one set of historical circumstances, but utterly irrelevant and harmful under another set of circumstances.

This distinction between a universal spiritual message, on the one side, and its limited expressions in sects and creeds under socio-political compulsions, on the other, is what the Indian spiritual tradition calls *śruti* and *smṛti* respectively. Our tradition also emphasises that *śruti* is eternal and for all ages, while *Smṛti* is temporal and relevant only for particular ages and historical circumstances, and that *smṛtis* need to be set aside when they become obsolete and new *smṛtis* developed suited to the new circumstances. It is this process that helps religion to remain as a progressive force in society. Where this process is lacking, the religion concerned becomes out of tune with the age; it becomes a procrustean bed to its followers distorting their personalities; and all this because its now universal *śruti* elements become dominated and suppressed by its now obsolete *smṛti* elements. Regarding all *smṛtis* in general, Sri Ramakrishna's pithy utterance correctly conveys the Indian idea: 'Moghal coins have no currency under the (East India) Company's rule'. This Indian idea finds an echo in Toynbee (*An Historian's Approach to Religion,* pp: 262-64):

> 'Thus, in our society in our time, the task of winnowing the chaff away from the grain in mankind's religious heritage is being forced upon us by a conjunction of social and spiritual circumstances. ...
>
> 'In the life of all higher religions, the task of winnowing is a perennial one, because their historic harvest is not pure grain. In the heritage of each of the higher religions, we are aware of the presence of two kinds of ingredients. There are essential counsels and truths, and there are non-essential practices and propositions.
>
> 'The essential counsels and truths are valid at all times and places, as far as we can see through the dark glass of mankind's experience up to date. ... But, at the same time, these same higher religions are historical institutions; and they have been making a transit through space-time in which, at every point-moment in their trajectory, they have been encountering the local and temporary circumstances of human life. ...
>
> 'These accidental accretions are the price that the permanently and universally valid essence of a higher religion has to pay for communicating its message to the members of a particular society in a particular stage of this society's history.'

19. *Modern Indian Wisdom*

Modern Indian wisdom is engaged today in identifying the eternally valid *śruti* elements in its hoary tradition, in detaching from it all obsolete *smṛti* elements and throwing them overboard without a tear, and forging new *smṛtis* in tune with tne spirit and needs of the modern age. The first such new *smṛti* we have forged is the Indian Constitution which, in its vision of the dignity and equality of man and its stress on the translation of that vision into social reality, is a noble document voicing the ideals of modern humanistic thought and breathing the eternal spirit of the *śruti* constituent of our national religious tradition and of all other world religions. This new *Smṛti* at once cancels all those provisions of all the previous *Smṛtis* of all our religions which go against it. And our free Indian state is the instrument of our Constitution for the creation of a free and egalitarian social order for the first time on the soil of India. The second new *smṛti* we have forged is the Hindu Code Bill which had cancelled all the previous *smṛti* codes of the Hindus with respect to marriage, inheritance etc.

This detachment of social and political control of human life in India from the purview of the obsolete *smṛtis* of the various religious traditions, with a view to the social and political welding of the people of India into an universal Indian democratic political nationality, will become complete only by the Indian Parliament enacting, in the coming years, a third new *smṛiti,* namely, a national civil code, applicable to all Indian citizens—Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and all others.

This is one of the two healthy fruits of the wise secular policy of our political state, the other fruit being, as a by-product of the first, the steady freeing of our various religious traditions from the burden of their obsolete *smṛti* constituents; these have been politically and socially separatist and divisive forces and the source of much evil to our nation, including the partition of India, and they have militated against the free expression of the universal and progressive *śruti* elements of these religious traditions, namely, their essential core of spiritual truths. These obsolete *smṛti* elements of each of our religious traditions have looked upon themselves as finished and final systems; they have accordingly been the nurseries, in recent centuries, of rigid, reactionary, and backward-looking political and social ideologies and programmes, and intolerant of all other *smṛitis* and their ideologies and programmes. Freed from the grip of these negative forces, all religions in

India, in the modern age, have the supreme opportunity to cultivate their universal spiritual values and to co-operate with each other in the urgent mission of providing the *bread* of spirituality to modern man, instead of the *stones* of discredited dogmas and divisive social programmes, with a view to rescuing him from the soul-killing aspects of modern materialism.

20. *A University to Point to Wisdom while Imparting Knowledge*

A university is a corporation of students and teachers engaged in the exciting work of acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. As a centre of higher education, it takes, or ought to take, all knowledge for its field of study. The range of human knowledge is not exhausted by the subjects relating to the physical sciences and the humanities—relating to what has come to be known in modern times as the secular or positivistic field of knowledge. This restriction of knowledge to the secular field was purely a Western reaction against the dogmatic, intolerant, and anti-science posture of Western religion obtaining in the West since the sixteenth century. It has done its service to knowledge by enormously advancing the rapid growth and expansion of the physical sciences, free from all theological restraints and constraints. After four centuries of such accelerating scientific developments, which have revolutionized human thinking and human living all over the globe, the physical sciences themselves, in this twentieth century, have begun to be conscious of the limitations of their own conclusions and methods, have begun to recognize that the mystery of man overshadows the mystery of the physical universe, and have also begun to reach out to the spiritual above the physical, neurological, and even psychical levels. Newer and newer ranges of data from deeper and deeper levels of experience, relating both to external nature and to human nature, are forcing upon modern Western science the need for a reassessment of the nature and scope of human knowledge itself. A report of a commission for University reform in West Germany, relating particularly to technical education, but equally valid for all higher education, contains the following suggestions significant in this context (Quoted by nuclear scientist Erwin Schrodinger in his book: *What is Life?, p. 115)*:

'Each lecturer in a technical university should possess the following abilities:

(a) To see the limits of his subject-matter. In his teaching, to make the students aware of these limits and to show them that, beyond these limits, forces come into play which are no longer entirely rational, but arise out of life and human society itself.

(b) To show in every subject the way that leads beyond its own narrow confines to broader horizons of its own.'

Thus, the conclusions of physics and chemistry become modified in biology, due to newer forces coming to evidence in biology; the conclusions of biology become, similarly, modified in anthropology and sociology, for the same reasons. And Vedānta suggests that a complete science of man in depth will similarly result in modification of the conclusions of cultural anthropology and sociology, in view of unique new forces coming into view in human experience. A science of man may start with the physical sciences of physics and chemistry and anatomy and physiology; but it cannot end with the conclusions of these sciences; if it does so, it will do scientific violence to many of the data revealed by the depth-study of the human personality.

In answer to a question by a student; *kasmin nu bhagavo vijñāte sarvam idaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati*— 'What is that (Reality), O Blessed one, by knowing which all this (universe of time and space and causality) becomes known?'— the teacher in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.1.4), in his reply, divides all knowledge into two categories, namely, *aparā,* ordinary, i.e. knowledge of the changeable and perishable dimension of nature, and *parā,* higher, i.e. knowledge of the *akṣaram,* i.e. the changeless and imperishable dimension of nature.

All positivistic knowledge, consisting of the physical sciences and the humanities, including the knowledge contained in the Vedas and other sacred books of religions, is relegated by the Upaniṣad to the *aparā* category, since they deal with the changeable aspects of reality and, as such, are only knowledge of the relative, not of the absolute. And *pārā vidyā* is that which gives knowledge of the imperishable, of the absolute, of God. The Upaniṣad boldly includes, in the *aparā* category, the knowledge contained even in the holy Vedas and other sacred books. As beautifully explained by Sri Ramakrishna through a parable:

> The sacred books do not give us knowledge of the imperishable. of the absolute, or of God. They give us only information about God! The Hindu almanac often contains forecast of the rainfall of the year. But if you squeeze the almanac, you will not get a single drop of water!

God is to be sought and realized in experience, say the Upaniṣads and all Indian spiritual tradition, and is not to be sought in books, holy or otherwise. And this is *parā vidyā,* the science of the imperishable reality, of God who is the one Self in all. Accordingly, all Indian higher education, to be truly higher, should not only give to the student the entire range of secular knowledge contained in the physical sciences and the humanities, *but also point out to him what lies beyond them*. It should direct the attention of its students to the way that leads beyond the narrow confines of all secular knowledge to the deeper dimensions of knowledge, as remarked by the West German university reform commission report referred to earlier.

This university, situated in the sacred city of Amritsar, bears the name of a great spiritual teacher, who embraced in his infinite heart people belonging to all religions, who taught man to love his fellowmen and express that love in service, who preached effectively a message of honest labour and its dignity, whose whole life was a successful fight on behalf of reason, on behalf of the spiritual growth of man, and on behalf of his character-excellence, on the one hand, and against superstition and all forms of religious magic and cheap mysticism, on the other. It is a great honour and privilege, and no less a great responsibility as well, for an educational institution to bear the name of Guru Nānak, who is a bright star in the galaxy of wise spiritual teachers India has produced, all of whom embodied and represented *the highest level* of education, in which all knowledge flowers into wisdom and character. Modern thinkers like Bertrand Russell have warned modern man that he must achieve this rising from knowledge to wisdom if he is to have peace and happiness (*Impact of Science on Society,* p. 120-21):

> 'We are in the middle of a race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends. Given sufficient folly as to ends, every increase in the skill required to achieve them is to the bad. The human race has survived hitherto owing to ignorance and incompetence; but given knowledge and competence combined with folly, there can be no certainty of survival. Knowledge is power, but it is power for evil as much

as for good. It follows that, unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.'

21. *Conclusion*

Every thinking citizen in India today must not only strive to take his or her people from ignorance to knowledge but also from knowledge to wisdom. Says the *Gītā* (IV.38): *Na hi jñānena sadṛśaṁ pavitram iha vidyate*— 'There is nothing so purifying as wisdom in this world'. It is my hope that this university will become a beacon of knowledge and wisdom, not only to the people of Punjab, but also to the people of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh and, what is more, to the people of the other Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province region across the border.

17

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL WORK*

1. *Introduction*

I AM thankful to this Tata Institute of Social Sciences for inviting me to address its Convocation. Yours is the premier institution of its kind in our country with a high reputation for efficient management and purposeful teaching. I feel a sense of kinship with students and teachers of schools of social work and social sciences. That kinship arises from the common field of our study, namely, the science of man, and the common field of our practical endeavours, namely, his growth, development, and fulfilment.

I congratulate those among the students here who are the happy recipients of degrees today. Behind you lie hard work and struggle to master the knowledge and technique of your special discipline in particular, and of modern knowledge in general. But the road ahead, I need not remind you, is harder still; it is also longer and more momentous. How I wish that, by my participation in today's joyous function, I could help you even a little to make it more fruitful, though not less strenuous!

If I have accepted the kind invitation of your Director, Dr. M.S. Gore, who is my old friend since our Delhi days, to address your Convocation this evening, it is because of my secret desire and hope of being stimulated in your company—the company of a group of trained social workers and teachers, and to stimulate you, in turn, if I can, through the unpropitious medium of a conventional convocation speech.

2. *The Philosophic Vision*

Your own field of study is the science of man in society. Vast and highly important as it is, it is only a part of the wider field of the total

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* Convocation Address delivered at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, on 3 June 1967

science of man. Your field of work, similarly, though highly important in this industrial age, is only a segment of the vast field of social work. No man's actual life or work touches more than a fringe of the total area of life and work in a society. But his *thought* and *vision* are not so restricted. They can encompass an ever-widening vista of life and existence, if not the whole of it. This steady expansion of thought and vision imparts a sense of depth and quality and significance to his otherwise humdrum life and work. This is philosophy, not as understood in its prosaic academic sense, but as spiritual vision arising from an inward growth and development. This inward growth emerges from a total alertness of mind and awareness when invested in the pursuit of truth and excellence in the context of one's life and work, however trivial in themselves these latter may be. The wider the range and variety of the data, the truer and firmer becomes the scientific theory based on them. The efficiency of a man's life and work, similarly, is directly proportional to his grip on the field of experience. The vaster the field and the firmer the grip, the greater becomes the efficiency of his life and work. This philosophic conviction finds expression in a famous passage of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (I. i. 10):

Yadeva vidyayā karoti, śraddhaya upaniṣadā, tadeva vīryavattaraṁ bhavati—

'Whatever is done through *vidyā*, knowledge (mastery of the technical know-how), *śraddhā*, faith (conviction as to its worthiness and in one's ability to achieve it), and *upaniṣad*, inward meditation (going into the subject in all its range and depth), that alone achieves superior energy (of efficiency).'

3. *Social Work: Traditional and Modern*

Social work, in general terms, is work done by man in the service of society. It remains restricted when confined to the rearing of a family, but becomes unrestricted when extended to society at large outside the immeditate biological group. All such extension is the fruit of an ethical impulse expressing itself as charity and philanthropy. This was all the scope of social work until the onset of the modern industrial age. This is true not only of India, but of all human society, including the Western, till about the eighteenth century A.D. In none of these was the need felt for widening the scope of social work, for organized social work, to tackle the challenge of social problems; whatever problems arose were such as could be handled by the prevailing institution of the joint family and by the spirit of philanthropy fostered in the individual members of the community by the teachings of religion. Problems calling for organized social work, including the active interference of the political state, are only the product of the special conditions arising out of the modern industrial and technological civilization. To quote Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer *(Evolution of Hindu Moral Ideals,* Kamala Lectures, Calcutta University, pp. 174-75):

> 'The idea of social service as now understood is a feature of modern times. As observed by Dean Inge with reference to early Christianity, there were no "causes" in antiquity.'

On the subject of social service, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says:

> *'The term, social service is a comparatively new one in Great Britain. If it has been used previous to the twentieth century, it would have meant philanthropy and charity in the ordinary sense.'*

Industrialism disturbs the patterns of the age-old social relations, stimulates increasing social mobility, raises the tempo of human appetites and their satisfactions, and gives rise to a large number and variety of social problems. Modern industrial civilization faced the challenge of these problems through the evolution of several types of specialized forms of social work with distinctive techniques and methods of approach, all based on a steadily developing modern science of sociology. Whether understood in general terms, as in the traditional society, or in special terms, as in the industrial society, all social work involves the raising of certain fundamental problems as to the nature and destiny of man and the meaning and significance of his social *milieu,* which a philosophy of social work is called upon to solve. I shall try my best to share with you what light India has shed on these momentous questions and on man's path to spiritual freedom and fulfilment.

4. *Man versus Society*

The family as the unit of society has ever been the nursery of the society's culture and morals. In the modern age, this concept of the family and its fundamental importance for society received a challenge from Marxist-Leninist thought. But that challenge has slowly worn away with the years, and the family has emerged unscathed out of the Bolshevik Revolution in the U. S. S. R. The family is a small, intimate biological group held together by bonds, biological and spiritual. When this group expands into a society in forming a clan or tribe or nation, the biological bond becomes less and less a determinant, while the spiritual bond becomes more and more dominant. This spiritual bond expresses itself as ethical awareness and social feeling. It is this awareness and feeling that are the stimuli behind all the efforts of man to achieve civilization, culture, and the higher life.

Thus, it is only in the social context, with its stimulus for the expression of his ethical and moral sense, that man achieves a more-than-biological personality. This discloses the presence of the spiritual man behind the physical man, a higher self behind his sense-bound lower self. The latter makes him essentially self-centred and a seeker of mere organic satisfactions and physical survival, through competition and struggle. The former makes him more and more other-centred and a seeker of ethical and other higher values. This betokens the first stages of the manifestation of the ever-present spiritual dimension of the human personality. And since this is achieved by him only in the social context, which also provides him, through its cumulative cultural tradition, with the wherewithal for the expansion of his knowledge and awareness, he is under obligation to society in a fundamental way. Apart from society, man does not evolve his truly human personality. *The sense of this social obligation and the methods and forms of its discharge, the rights of the individual in the context of the social group, and the relative claims of these obligations and rights, constitute the social philosophy of any particualr group of human beings.* This philosophy may be, and in all older civilizations invariably is, suffused, with a cosmical reference provided by religon.

The influence of this cosmical reference in religions had, and still has, one important social result, namely, the uniform emphasis more on duties than on rights, more on obligations than on privileges. This is why all work, including social work, done under the inspiration of religion possesses an intensity and depth rarely found in work done with purely secular motives. The significance of this fact of motivation for any philosophy of social work is great; and I shall discuss it in due course.

5. *The Nature of Ethical Awareness*

Every work produces a change in the ratio of forces in its environment. Man works to change his environment to suit his purposes. By working with his hands, the change effected in the environment was very little; then came tools which intensified the process which, however, reached revolutionary proportions in the modern age through the machines of modern technology.

Man's life is cast in two environments, natural and social. The change which tools and machines make in his natural environment makes its impact on his social environment as well. Social work has primarily to deal with man and his social environment and their interaction. Unlike the natural environment, which consists of impersonal things and forces, the social environment consists of persons, which fact introduces, for the first time in the history of evolution, the concept of value into this objective world. Each person recognizes this value in himself, and often fails to recognize its focus in others. In the social setting of his life, he is always confronted with these other centres of value in the persons around him. The recognition and appreciation of this second focus has not been easy for man. He has treated his fellow man more as an impersonal object or thing, to be used to suit his own ends than as a person having his own ends. This is revealed in history's dark and dreary record of the exploitation of man by man. Such exploitation is not only of the much talked of economic and political variety, but also of the intellectual, moral, and religious types; it is not only man exploiting man, but also man exploiting woman. What is common in all such exploitations is the fact that the focus of value is recognized only in the subject and not in the object; whereas the uniqueness of the social environment is that its objects are all essentially subjects. *The recognition of the subject in a social object is ethical sense.* Once this recognition comes, exploitation gives place to service as the valid form of inter-human relationship.

This message of the ethical impulse is conveyed beautifully in the maxim of Kant (*Metaphysics of Morals*, London, 1909, p. 47):

> 'So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of another, in every case as an end, never only as means.'

This at once eliminates all possibilities of exploitation of man by man. But this excellence is hard to achieve. To millions of men and women in any given society, it is only a possibility, but not an actuality; while, for millions more, it is not even a possibility; they have not even heard of this truth. In the words of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (II. 7):

Śravaṇāyāpi bahubhiryo na labhyaḥ
Śṛṇvanto' pi bahavo yaṁ na vidyuḥ—

'Even to hear of it, many do not get the opportunity; many, (on the other hand), even after hearing about it, do not understand.'

6. *Spirituality as the Science of the Inner Life*

What happens to a man when he understands this truth and begins to live it? It betokens, as I said earlier, the first stages of the manifestation of the essential spirituality of the human personality. What does this signify in the context of the search for the meaning of human life and destiny? It points to a profound focus of value within man, his essential divine nature, the manifestation of which constitutes the goal of human life. This leads us to the recognition of a third environment in which his life is cast, namely, an inner spiritual environment, over and above the natural and the social ones already referred to. And there is constant interaction between this inner spiritual environment and the outer social environment. The handling of this interaction by man, individually and collectively, is the one determinant of all social health or ill-health, on the one hand, and all human well-being or unfulfilment, on the other.

When this truth is recognized, the work that a man does in society is seen in a new light. Every work, as I have said earlier, produces a change in the ratio of forces in its natural and social environments. To this, we have now to add that it produces such a change in a third environment as well, namely, the inner world of man. *The knowledge and discipline of the forces of this inner world* *constitute the scope of the science and technique of spirituality*. This is the true meaning of religion, according to Indian thought. Knowledge is power as much in this unfamiliar inner world as in the familiar world outside. All social feeling and awareness is the product of an expansion of the human personality. In the distinctively human phase of evolution, such expansion is not physical or biological, but spiritual.

7. *Evolution and Ethics*

Discussing, in the light of the revolutionary advances of twentieth-century biology, the aim of human evolution as 'greater fulfilment', Sir Julian Huxely says (*Evolution after Darwin*, The University of Chicago Centennial, Vol. I, *The Evolution of Life*, p. 20):

> 'In the light of our present knowledge, man's most comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of organization, or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment—the fuller realization of more possibilities by human species collectively and more of its component members individually.'

And pleading for a scientific study of the scope of this concept of fulfilment, Huxely concludes (*ibid.*, p.21):

> 'Once greater fulfilment is recognized as man's ultimate or dominant aim, we shall need a science of human possibilities to help guide the long course of psycho-social evolution that lies ahead.'

It is such a science, a science of human possibilities, that India understands by the term 'religion', the science of the inner life. She sought and found this science in her ancient Upaniṣads, and she integrated it with the sciences of matter and life to emerge as the rational and unifying philosophy of Vedānta.

There is such a thing as the spiritual growth of man; it is not so obvious; but it is more significant than his more obvious physical growth. For it is only through such spiritual growth that man is able to break through the crust of his biological limitations, which make him prone to self-centredness and exploitation, and send out tendrils of love and concern for his fellow men, to enter into, and be entered into by, brother man, to manufacture, in the words of Sorokin of Harvard University, increasing altruism in the human heart. Without this spiritual growth, the only possible relationship between man and man is, in the words of Bertrand Russell, that between two billiard balls, namely, collision.

8. *Quantity versus Quality*

It is when we tackle this inner world in ourselves, in the context of the work we do, or are called upon to do, in the outer world, that we become confronted with the problem of motivation. History reveals that social work done under the best of religious motivations exhibits greater qualitative excellence than that done under the best of secular motivations. *The capacity to give one's best to a cause is a spiritual capacity.* That capacity manifests itself when the motivations of profit, pleasure, and power, which proceed from the lower self of man, become weakened by spiritual knowledge and spiritual resolve proceeding from the awakening of his higher Self. The former is man, sense-bound, circumscribed, and finite; the latter is man, spiritually free, expansive, and unlimited. The unfoldment of this spiritual man in the context of the work that man does for the good of society is the one goal of all work and of all society, according to Indian spiritual thought. The criterion of social work, from the secular point of view, is quantity; from the religious point of view, it is quality. The philosophy of Vedānta accepts the importance of both the criteria and harmonizes them in the light of a comprehensive spirituality. This is the immortal contribution of the *Gītā* to the philosophy of social work, nay, of all work.

It is when we are confronted with the problem of quality that the subject of motivation becomes significant. And motivation involves moral choice and moral judgement. This brings up to the fore the reality of the inner man and his growth or atrophy. Up to a certain point, human life and action can stand the test of quantity; pushed beyond that, man becomes de-humanized. He shines in his truly human form when he stands the test of quality. Stressing the importance of this concept of quality in the assessment of evolution at the human stage, Sir Julian Huxley says (Lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision', *Evolution after Darwin*, Vol. III, p.252):

> Man is therefore of immense significance. ... He is a reminder of the existence, here and there, in the quantitative vastness of cosmic matter and its energy equivalents, of a trend towards mind, with its accompaniment of quality and richness of existence—and, what is more, a proof of the importance of mind and quality in the all-embracing evolutionary process.'

Again (*ibid.*, p. 257):

> 'I spoke of quality. This must be the dominant concept of our new belief system—quality and richness as against quantity and uniformity.'

Discussing the concept of utility in the light of this new evolutionary vision, Huxley says (*ibid.*, p. 259):

> 'Once we truly believe ... that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for more human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or TV sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary, but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, not an end in itself.'

And highlighting the importance of quality for the human evolution lying ahead, Huxley concludes (*ibid.*, pp. 260-61):

> 'Thus the evolutionary vision ... illuminates our existence in a simple, but almost overwhelming way. ... It shows us our destiny and our duty. It shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality.'

9. *The Problems of Motivation*

Religious motivations for social service have ranged from the selfishly hedonistic to the utterly self-effacing. In the former, there is emphasis on a life of good works and worldly achievement, coupled with a concern for social esteem, while alive, and, after death, on a heaven, where it is all pleasure and no pain, unlike the earth, where there is a mixture of both, with pain often predominating. Today, we consider this childish, and prefer the secular hedonist who also loves profit and pleasure, but does not hanker after a heaven after death. But this childish motivation hides a profound truth about human nature and destiny, which a mere positivistic philosophy often fails to grasp. 'Heaven' stands for the truth of the 'Beyond'; it is a mythical presentation in sensual terms of what lies beyond the senses and the sensate mind . Hedonism, whether secular or religious, derives from a conception of the nature of man as entirely sense-bound and pleasure-seeking . It cannot get a glimpse of the spiritual dimension of the human personality, or of action motivated by purely ethical considerations . So far as India is concerned, she attained these two heights in her ancient Upaniṣads.

10. *India's Vision of Human Excellence*

The Upaniṣads represent the high-water-mark of Indian spiritual striving and realization. The sages of the Upaniṣads sought truth in experience freely and fearlessly, unhampered by the dogmas of religion, the compulsions of society and the political state, or the predilections of personality. Their greatest discovery was the truth of the divinity and infinitude of man and the spiritual unity of all existence. They called the divine in man the Ātman, or Self, and discovered its essential nature to be ever pure, ever awakened, and ever free; and they proclaimed the unity of Ātman, the real Self of man, with Brahman, the Self of the universe. This glorious vision of the spiritual solidarity of all existence, which alone can become the basis of a rational ethics and of all progressive inter-human relationships, finds expression in the very opening verse of the very first of the Upaniṣads, namely, the ***Īśā Upaniṣad:***

Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kinca jagatyām jagat;
Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthāḥ mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasvit dhanam—

'All this—whatever is ephemeral in this changeful universe—must be enveloped by the Lord. By this renunciation, nourish yourself. Do not covet the wealth of anyone'.

The Upaniṣads announce that the awakening to this eternal truth is the aim of human existence and the fullest fruition of the spiritual life. But it is hidden from man due to his finitude, arising from his thraldom to his body, his sense-organs, and his sensate mind. These constitute man, the known, beyond which is man, the unknown, in the language of Alexis Carrel. Man, the known, is essentially self-centred and the focus of all tension and sorrow. The highest he can achieve in the field of inter-human relationship is the ethics of enlightened self interest, which often tends to less and less enlightenment and more and more selfishness. The vision of man as the Ātman provided the inspiration for Indian thought to develop a social ethics charged with a man-ward passion, and a religious discipline filled with a God-ward love and devotion.

11. *The Gītā's Message of a Comprehensive Spirituality*

These implications, and their significance for human life, conduct, and destiny were brought out by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in his message of the *Gītā*.

The *Gītā,* at the very outset, rejects heaven and the hedonistic philosophy behind it as unworthy of man's true spiritual stature (II. 42-44). In its place, the *Gītā* offers the realization of the divinity already within man as the highest objective of life. It teaches that, by ethical and spiritual discipline, involving the practice of self-regarding and other-regarding virtues and inward meditation, man can overcome his biological and other limitations, and realize the truth of his inborn divine nature. This is *mukti* or spiritual freedom. Vedānta upholds that this freedom is as much the stimulus behind, as the goal in front, of every human action. It is that which every human being will realize sooner or later; none is barred, because it is the birthright of one and all, the saint or the sinner, the rich or the poor, the learned or the ignorant, man or woman. The method and means of this attainment is what Vedānta terms *dharma,* which, in its twin aspects of *abhyudaya,* ethics of social welfare, and *niḥśreyasa,* ethics of spiritual emancipation, constitutes the comprehensive spiritual education of man leading to his total fulfilment. These sum up the goal-seeking trends and fruits of all his activities and processes in the political, economic, intellectual, ethical, artistic, and religious fields. The one precondition of this total fulfilment is purity of the inner life, which involves man's conquest of his lower self.

It is in this context, against this unlimited background, against this qualitative enrichment of human life, that the *Gītā* views all human action. Action is inevitable, says the *Gītā;* none remains even for an instant without doing some work or other; nature compels (III. 5). But work done under the promptings of man's lower nature leads to more and more bondage and eventual unfulfilment. This is the tragedy of man, enacted every day, everywhere, and vividly presented to us in the world's great literary heritage. Goethe has his Faust lamenting thus during his soliloquy in the wood:

> Oh! for the broken state of man: I know
> Our unfulfilment now! Thou gavest bliss
> Which brings me near and nearer to the gods
> And gavest, too, the dark companion whom

I cannot rid me of; though with his scorn
He breaks my pride, and in a single word,
A breath, turns all thy gifts and makes them nothing.
He builds a wild fire in my heart, a blaze,
Till from desire I stumble to possession,
And in possession languish from desire.

12. *Yoga as Double Efficiency*

But all actions, says the *Gītā,* can be converted into spiritual education of the whole man under the guidance of a rational ethics and philosophy. Work done in a spirit of non-attachment helps man to develop his unlimited spiritual personality. By being unattached to his limited, sensate, lower self, man receives 'intimations of immortality', as Wordsworth puts it; man begins to experience the infinite dimensions of his personality. His vision and sympathies broaden. He comes across a vast reservoir of spiritual energy within himself, which makes him achieve a double efficiency in his life, namely, outer social efficiency and inner spiritual efficiency. The *Gītā* calls this by the name of *yoga,* the science and art of the spiritual life, and gives two important definitions of this science: *yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*—'yoga is efficiency in action' (II. 50) and *samatvaṁ yoga ucyate*—'Yoga is called even-mindedness' (II. 48).

Work with attachment, work proceeding from the level of the ego, is characterized by much fuss and noise; that is the sign of its inefficiency proceeding from lack of inner discipline; it tends steadily to the inner impoverishment of the worker. The more efficient the machine, the more silent and smooth its functioning, and the greater its output of work. An inefficient machine, such as a worn-out car, is all fuss and noise with very little output in speed. Calm, silent, steady, and efficient work, sustained by deep social feeling, is the mark of true spirituality. Therefore, says the *Gītā* (II.49):

Dūreṇa hyavaraṁ karma buddhiyogāt dhanañjaya;
Buddhau śaraṇam anviccha kṛpaṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ—

'Work (done with attachment) is verily far inferior to that performed from the stand-point of *buddhiyoga* (the *yoga* of equable reason); seek refuge, O Arjuna, in this *buddhi.* Small-minded are they who act motivated by selfish results.'

13. *The Worker Behind The Work*

India's philosophy of social work, deriving from the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā,* conceives every one in a society as a social worker. The simple housewife or the Prime Minister of the ṣtate, the specialized social worker or the college professor, the street sweeper or the administrator, the fisherman or the factory labourer, the farmer or the spiritual teacher—each and all are workers in the vineyard of society.

Viewed from the outside, they are all social workers; but viewed from the inside, if that were possible, they will reveal a wide range of qualitative types, disclosing different degrees of spiritual integration and enrichment, or disintegration and impoverishment. In the words of the Sanskrit dramatist, Bhāsa *(Avimāra, 5.5):*

Prājñasya mūrkhasya ca kāryayoge
Samatvam abhyeti tanur na buddhiḥ—

'When actions are performed by the wise man and the fool, there is equality of condition with respect to the body, but not with respect to the *buddhi* or reason.'

Each one of these types, therefore, needs training and discipline in order to achieve the double efficiency above referred to, namely, outward social efficiency and inward spiritual efficiency. A social worker must produce through his work tangible results in the outer world of society; this is the criterion of his efficiency. But is this the only criterion? Modern sociology tends to be content with this one criterion. But theoretical considerations arising from a deeper view of man, and practical considerations disclosed by a vast array of field experiences in all parts of the world generally, and the advanced countries particularly, are forcing modern sociology to recognize a second criterion of efficiency in the inner world of the worker himself. Experience teaches us today that outer efficiency is often nullified by inner inefficiency; physical health is nullified by mental ill-health. A worker is not just a machine; an exclusive efficiency criterion of mere productivity can be applied to a machine, with certain reservations. But it fails in the case of man because of the presence of a significant second factor, namely, his inner life. *The nourishment of his inner life is an important efficiency factor*, which *modern man and modern sociology will neglect at the peril of his individual and collective welfare.*

In the light of the spiritual, no work is high or low in itself; it is the attitude of the worker that makes a work high or low. *The discipline and control of this attitude is the contribution of spiritual philosophy to human life and work.* The small man, in the light of this philosophy, is not the man who does what is, in the secular estimate of society, small work, but who does any work in a small way. Even small work becomes big when done by a great man; and conversely, big work becomes small when done by a small man. Kabīr weaving cloth on a loom or Gandhi spinning thread on a charka helped to raise the status of the humble loom and charka. On the other hand, a greedy priest or a corrupt politician lowers the status of the high calling of priesthood or politics. How much the inner man counts in all fields of outer work is evident from these and other instances. Life without quality is life lived in vain; and quality is a value concept; and values are not mechanical, but spiritual. In the protesting words of Bertrand Russell *(The Impact of Science on Society,* P.77):

> 'The Machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism. ...
>
> 'Whatever else may be mechnical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

14. *The Human Tragedy*

Man is the focus of all values; but he needs an inner discipline, in the context of his outer life and work, to liberate these values lying in the deeper reaches of his personality. The small man is small only because of a lack of this discipline and the spiritual riches it yields; his ignorance, his spiritual blindness, his biologically-oriented will, make him self-centred and concerned only with his own profit and pleasure. The great man is great because of his spiritual awareness and social feeling. But behind the small and the big, says Vedānta, is the infinite Atman, assuring the spiritual equality and solidarity of all beings. As proclaimed by the *Gītā* (V. 19):

Ihaiva tairjitaḥ sargo yeṣāṁ sāmye sthitaṁ manaḥ;
Nirdosaṁ hi samaṁ brahma tasmat brahmaṇi te sthitaḥ—

'Relative (finite), existence has been overcome by them, even in this life, whose minds rest in *sāmya* (sameness), since Brahman (the Self of all beings) is the same in all and without imperfection; therefore they indeed are established in Brahman.'

The physical body grows through physical nourishment; this is a palpable experience needing no proof to anybody. The mental personality of man similarly grows through mental food consisting of experience and knowledge, mostly of the external world and, to a slight extent, of the inner world as well. This growth is real, though less palpable than the physical. These two constitute the world-oriented man ever needing support and stimulus from the social environment. But the freedom of his spirit is constantly imperilled by the shifting nature of the response of that social environment to his craving for support and stimulus. This becomes a tragedy when he ceases to be a productive unit of society. For, under a secular ideology, his value for society is not for himself as a person, but for his productive capacity. If man had no greater heights of spiritual freedom to conquer within himself, he would be wise to make peace with his outer environment and live on, albeit grumbling and complaining all the way, and without cheer and hope. This is a dismal picture of the destiny of so glorious and unique a phenomenon of evolution as man. This was the tragedy of man in some past epochs, as it is also in the present; it is writ large even over the best of man's secular achievements. Referring to the highly gifted ancient Greeks, whose official religion was but a handmaid of its political state, Lowes Dickinson says (*The Greek View of Life,* p. 68):

> 'The more completely the Greek felt himself to be at home in the world, the more happily and freely he abandoned himself to the exercise of his powers, the more intensely and vividly he lived in action and in passion, the more alien, bitter, and incomprehensible did he find the phenomena of age and death. On this problem, so far as we can judge, he received from his religion but little light and still less consolation. The music of his brief life closed with a discord unresolved; and even before reason had brought her criticism to bear upon his creed, its deficiency was forced upon him by his feeling.'

15. *India's Message of Hope And Cheer*

India's vision of human nature and destiny is deeply concerned with this human tragedy, and ever whispers into the ears of man a perennial message of hope and cheer . It tells him of his inalienable divine nature and the spiritual freedom which is his very birth-right. He is unaware of it; his spiritual blindness is the measure of his tragedy. He has to awaken himself to this truth. Through his personal life and social activities, his successes and defeats, his joys and sorrows, through all the ups and downs of his life, if he trains his *buddhi* or reason in the efficient handling of the chariot of his personality, he is sure to advance step by step towards spiritual enlightenment, freedom, and fulfilment. In the course of his speech at the historic Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893, Swami Vivekananda quoted the following Upaniṣadic verse, in which an ancient sage addresses the whole of humanity to convey an eternal gospel of human redemption (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad,* 2.5 and 3.8):

Śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ
āye dhāmāni divyāni tasthuḥ;
Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntam
ādityavarṇaṁ tamasasparastāt;
Tameva viditvā atimṛtyumeti
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya—

'Here ye, children of immortal bliss! aye, even those that dwell in the celestial regions! I have *realized* this infinite dimension of personality, effulgent like the sun, beyond all darkness (of ignorance and delusion). Knowing Him alone can man transcend death; there is no other way to the supreme goal.'

Here we find a strange new light shedding its rays on human life and work. It is the light of spiritual knowledge. It is also the fire, says the *Gītā* (IV. 37), which consumes all that is dross in life and action. Action means, to our ordinary understanding, simply an expenditure of mechanical energy. Even sages are bewildered, says the *Gītā* (IV. 16), as to the nature of action and inaction, and adds (IV. 17) that the way of action is difficult to penetrate.

Action and inaction, labour and leisure, appear antithetical to ordinary understanding. But scientific inquiry reveals their basic identity. In the words of L. P. Jacks (*The Education of the Whole Man*, p. 102):

> 'If you begin with labour, it begins to turn into leisure from the moment when art is applied to it. If you begin with leisure, it will turn into labour when science traces it to its roots.'

In the words of *Aṣṭāvakra Saṁhitā* (XVIII. 61):

Nivṛttirapi mūḍhasya pravṛttirupajāyate;
Pravṛttirapi dhīrasya nivṛttiphalabhāginī—

'For the foolish man, even leisure becomes labour; for the wise man, even labour yields the fruit of leisure.'

When the flood of spiritual knowledge begins to set in, sharp distinctions between labour and leisure, between sacred and secular, between contemplation and action, become gradually obliterated and eventually abolished. Illumining this truth, the *Gītā* says (IV. 18):

Karmaṇyakarma yaḥ paśyet akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ;
Sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt—

'He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is intelligent among men; he is the *yogin;* he is the one who has accomplished all his action.'

16. *India's Philosophy of Work*

India's philosophy of work, including social work, took note of the double reference of all work emphasized in man's religious heritage, namely, this-worldly welfare and other-worldly excellence, but subjected it to a rational scrutiny and investigation in the light of the spiritual vision of man developed in the Upaniṣads. This philosophy surveyed the human and world scene from the point of view of that vision and, retaining the double reference of work above-mentioned, transformed them into spiritual and human motivations. Thus, post-mortem heaven beyond, and hedonistic pleasures here, yielded place to the inner growth of man in spiritual awareness, to the development of a moral and spiritual character. In the theistic religions, these character traits were also accompanied by love and devotion to an all-holy and all-loving personal God, who is deeply concerned with the welfare of the world. This-worldly motivations of pleasure and worldly glory gradually evolved into the human values of social ethics through the widening of the Vedic concepts of *dharma* and *yajña,* until they reached their highest expression in the *Gītā* in the ethical motivation of *lokasaṅgraha,* universal human welfare (III. 25), and *sarvabhūtahita,* the welfare of all beings (XII. 4). This lofty ethical passion flavours the definition of *dharma* given by the merchant Tulādhāra to the ascetic Jājali in the *Mahābhārata ('Śānti Parva'* 254.9, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute Edition):

> *Sarveṣāṁ yaḥ suhṛt nityaṁ sarveṣāṁ ca hite rataḥ;*
> *Karmaṇā manasā vācā sa dharmaṁ veda Jājale—*

'He knows *dharma,* O Jājali, who is always the friend of all, and who, through his actions, thought, and speech, is absorbed in (ensuring) the welfare of all'.

Vedānta thus transforms the 'beyond', the 'other world', etc. of theology into the perfection of character and vision *here* and *now.*

By providing a cosmical reference to individual actions, **philosophy imparts depth and efficiency to human life and work;** accordingly, even an imperfect philosophy is preferable to no **philosophy. Man's work *in* society and *for* society becomes more efficient when that work is backed by social awareness; but it be-**comes most efficient when this social awareness is suffused also with spiritual knowledge and awareness. This alone will ensure that our social work will enhance the dignity and stature of the men and women we serve; any social work that fails to ensure this becomes a **force against the emergence of quality in human evolution, however** quantitatively perfect it may have been. It is only by striving to be spiritual himself or herself that a social worker is able to rouse the **dignity and worth of the person served, by treating that person, as** Kant demanded, as an end in itself and not as a means.

17. *Indian Thought And The Modern Challenge*

This philosophy of work bequeathed by the Indian spiritual tradition has the power within it to spiritually equip modern man to meet the challenge of the modern age. It has received new accessions of strength in our time from spiritual teachers like Swami Vivekananda, whose 'life and teachings', in the words of Dr.S. Radhakrishnan, 'have prepared us for the new age of freedom in which we live. They tell us how best we can consolidate the freedom we have recently won'. *(Occasional Speeches and Writings,* First Series, p. 191)

Indian thought speaks of three types of work in the service of society, namely, physical help through the removal of physical wants, or through the saving of physical life; intellectual help through the gift of secular education and work efficiency; and spiritual help through the imparting of spiritual knowledge. It ranks the last as the highest in the scale of values.

Every philosophy of social work is confronted today with two contrasting challenges, namely, the challenge of man in the underdeveloped nations craving for the minimum of social welfare, and the challenge of man in the highly developed modern welfare states suffering from ennui and frustration, tension and sorrow. The former is understandable, while the latter makes man a tragic enigma to himself. What Schopenhauer said over a hundred years ago has become tragically true of man in this latter part of the twentieth century *(The World as Will and Idea,* Vol. I, p. 404):

> 'All men who are secure from want and care, now that, at last, they have thrown off all other burdens, become a burden to themselves'.

18. *Conclusion*

All modern welfare state philosophies are faced with this challenge of modern man's inner impoverishment in the context of external enrichment, inner insecurity in the context of external security. This challenge, which has slowly developed into a critique of modern social security philosophies voiced by several modern thinkers, including Bertrand Russell, their erstwhile advocate, has not found a better formulation and a more convincing answer than in the following testament of Swami Vivekananda, voicing the Indian point of view *(Karma Yoga,* Chapter III: 'The Secret of Work'. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol. I, p. 53):

> 'The miseries of the world cannot be cured by physical help only. Until man's nature changes, these physical needs will always arise, and miseries will always be felt, and no amount of physical help will cure them completely. The only solution of this problem is to make mankind pure. Ignorance is the mother of all the evil and all the misery we see. Let men have light, let them be pure and spiritually strong and educated, then alone will misery cease in the world, not before. We may convert every house in the country into a charity asylum, we may fill the land with hospitals, but the misery of man will still continue to exist, until man's character changes'.

18

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICE*

1. *Introduction*

I AM very thankful to the organizers of this function for inviting me to address this special meeting of the staff of the Lucknow Secretariat this afternon. I am in Lucknow just on a week's visit during which I am glad to have the opportunity to meet the enlightened citizens of this capital city of Uttar Pradesh at various public gatherings, including the one here where hundreds of you have gathered.

2. *The Problem of Inter-human Relationships*

Here I have been asked to speak to you on a very important topic, namely, 'The Philosophy of Service'. When I look around me in the India of today, the one theme that strikes me as of the greatest benefit to our nation is this subject of service. Our society bears the impress of all forms of exploitations, and that too for centuries, which man has practised on man—intellectuals exploiting the common people, the rich exploiting the poor, rulers exploiting their subjects, and man exploiting woman, and, often, women also exploiting each other. Every form of exploitation we have indulged in here; that alone explains the low level of life, individual and collective, that we have had for the past few centuries. As a result, we have had to pay a heavy price; centuries of political subjection and all forms of social humiliation have been heaped upon the people of India, rich and poor alike.

This should have opened our eyes. But today, after twenty years of political independence, we notice that we have not learnt the lessons of history. All the maladies that afflict our people today, all the troubles of our body-politic, proceed from one single source; and it is that man in India has devalued himself. He has not realized his own dignity and worth as man; he has not recognized the dignity and worth of man in his fellowmen. This is the subject that should become the sheet-anchor of our education and public life today, so that we may achieve nation-building on the only foundation on which it can be raised, namely, what Vivekananda called 'man-making'. The building up of a great modern nation out of the diverse elements of our society, with millennia of history behind it, is not an easy task. It calls for a new type of manhood and womanhood with deep convictions within and a tremendous will power to translate visions and ideas into real forms outside. Swami Vivekananda, more than seventy years ago, referred to this need when he expounded his thesis of a man-making education and a man-making religion. He said that religions of the world had become lifeless mockeries and that what we needed was character. These religions, as lived and practised by millions, hide behind their exterior piety a good deal of selfishness, social callousness, and violence. This has distorted our history, retarded our national growth, and thwarted our national purposes. Religion in India had long become reduced to a form of *piety-fringed worldliness*. The above words of Vivekananda have become of topical significance for our nation today when, after twenty years of independence, we have begun to despair of our nation's future, when we have begun to be unsure about the stability of our infant democratic state which we instituted with such enthusiasm and fanfare in 1947 and 1950.

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* Address at the special meeting of the Uttara Pradesh Government Secretariat staff, held at the Tilak Hall, Vidhan Bhavan, Lucknow Secretariat, on 2 April 1968

3. *Renunciation and Service*

Therefore, the one subject that should hold our attention today is the subject of man and the subject of inter-human relationships. What is the form of inter-human relationship that is conducive to general happiness and welfare? Man has exploited his fellow human beings throughout history. We are generally familiar only with one type of exploitation, namely, the economic, which has been highlighted by Marx and his school of thought. But exploitation can be and has been of other types as well. Whatever surplus resources a man possesses, he can easily use them to *exploit* other people. The other alternative is to utilise one's surplus energy, intelligence, wealth, and power to *serve* other people, to enhance the life of other people. Why has our nation chosen the first instead of the second alternative since our independence? Swami Vivekananda had proclaimed about seventy years ago (*The Complete Works,* Vol.V, p.228):

> 'Renunciation and service are the twin ideals of India. Intensify her in those channels, the rest will take care of itself.'

Renunciation of the little self with a view to manifesting the higher self and the spirit of service are the twin ideals of India. In the wake of our great national renaissance of the last century, the country did inspire itself with this spirit of renunciation and service and threw up bands and bands of dedicated workers in all parts of India for the cause of India's freedom and India's nation-building. As a result of their contributions the country became free and ended its centuries-long stagnation and slavery in 1947. Why we failed to continue in that great mood and temper thereafter is a mystery. It is amazing how our people, emerging from the darkness of their slavery of centuries to the light of freedom, could easily forget the lessons and warnings of their history and cease to be creative! History is replete with instances of nations bursting with creative energy on emerging from a spell of political slavery. The classical example of this is Athens. When it succeeded, by united and sustained struggle, in defeating its Persian invaders and freeing itself from their brief but deeply galling yoke, Athenian democracy experienced an ecstasy of freedom which issued forth during the next 50 years in an outburst of creative activity in every department of its national life—cultural, social, political, and artistic—which has brightened not only its own but all subsequent Western history as well. Why did we fail to experience a similar sustained ecstasy of delight on the attainment of freedom, not after a brief spell of slavery as in the case of Athens, but after centuries of bondage, and why did we allow our creative energies to dry up within a few brief years of independence? With the drying up of our creative spirit, we soon slipped back into our erstwhile stagnant ways, into moods of complacency and ways of selfishness and self-centredness. This is the tragedy of our brief post-independence history. And we have paid the price in shocks of military defeats, economic disasters, political disintegrations, and social upheavals. Where every one sought only his or her own happiness, no one is happy today.

4. *The Need for Creative Thinking*

This phenomenon is imparting a salutary lesson to us, the ethical lesson of mutuality and inter-dependence. The current maladies of our nation are inducing a mood of thinking and self-criticism among our people; and this is the brightest side of our national life today. Creative thinking is the sure sign of the onset of social health. All growth, development, and progress flow from thinking. Our nation has started to think after twenty years of what in the language of Vivekananda may be called 'not-thinking-carelessness'; we have become aware of the mess in which we are, and we have begun seriously to consider how we can get out of it. This is the surest sign of the onset of a trend towards health, towards national creativity. We have to sustain this trend, intensify it,and say good-bye to all complacency and its evil fruits of selfishness and self-centredness.

This is what brings me to you this afternoon, to think together with you as to how to restore our nation to health and vigour. Biology tells us that man is an inter-thinking species, the only such species in creation. He advances evolution through this inter-thinking process. And this is the work that we shall engage ourselves in during the quiet hour that we are together here. And this is the work that all patriotic citizens should engage themselves in when they meet together in groups. It is in this context, against this background, that I wish to discuss this great subject of the philosophy of service. We have been using the word 'service' mostly in a professional sense.We have the Union services, the State services, and a host of other services; I am not here to deal with them except as part of the wider field of inter-human relationships in general and the philosophy underlying the same.

5. *The Search for a Rational Ethics*

Service, as I said earlier, is the finest form of inter-human relationship. It involves a growth, a change for the better, in the individual man. What is that change? What is that growth ? Throughout these centuries, we have failed to discuss and comprehend this great subject, because for centuries together our forms of inter-human relationships were expressed in set forms and fixed moulds where growth of the human personality had no meaning. They were not rationally determined, but were determined by caste factors, by conventional religious dictations, and they yielded frozen patterns of conduct and behaviour, whose goodness or badness was derived from the authority of a text or of a caste mandate. We failed to develop a rational ethical code deriving sanction from human nature itself and capable of sustaining human conduct and behaviour in turn. *What our nation needs today is a pervasive concern for man as man, and not as cut up into castes, sects, and communities, and the formulation of a sanction for the same from a rational ethics and spirituality.*

Every human being is faced with the challenge of the presence of other human beings in the society. He can react to the social *milieu* either in a friendly way or in a hostile way depending upon his concept and assessment of himself. He chooses the hostile way when his only concern is his own survival and his own organic satisfactions. When this is the predominant motive, his behaviour is not far removed from that of animals. No actual human being, however, is always motivated thus. Even the lowest of human beings does sometimes experience a genuine concern for one or more other human beings; in this he seems to outreach his own limited self. This betokens the emergence of moral awareness in man; *its culture, growth, and development represent the specifically human phase of evolution, according to twentieth-century biology.*

6. *Evolution and Ethics*

Nineteenth-century biology could find no place for ethical sense and moral behaviour in its theory of evolution. Ethics and evolution ran parallel to each other. As expressed by Thomas Huxley in his *Evolution and Ethics,* evolution meant struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, whereas ethics meant the making of as many as possible fit to survive. But the revolutionary advances in this science in the twentieth century have made ethics central to evolution at the human stage.

Speaking on 'The Evolutionary Vision', Sir Julian Huxley, a noted contemporary biologist and grandson of Thomas Huxley, gives a spiritual orientation to the evolutionary process (*Evolution after Darwin, Vol. III, p. 215):*

> 'Man's evolution is not biological but psycho-social; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by breakthroughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization.'

Discussing, in the light of the revolutionary advances of twentieth-century biology, the aim of human evolution, or evolution at the human stage, as 'greater fulfilment', Sir Julian Huxley says (*ibid*, Vol. I, p. 20):

> 'In the light of our present knowledge, man's most comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of organization, or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment—the fuller realization of more possibilities by human species collectively and more of its component members individually.'

And pleading for a scientific study of the scope of this concept of fulfilment, Huxley concludes (*ibid.*, p. 21):

> 'Once greater fulfilment is recognized as man's ultimate or dominant aim, we shall need a science of human possibilities to help guide the long course of psycho-social evolution that lies ahead.'

It is this science, the science of human possibilities, that constitutes the spiritual core of the world's religions; and it is the central theme of our Upaniṣads and the *Gītā*.

7. *Psycho-social Evolution*

What is meant by psycho-social evolution? In a self-centred man, as in all animals, the psyche or mind or soul is limited and confined to the physical organism. In a moral man it expands, goes beyond the barriers of his physical organism, and enters, and is entered into by, other psyches of the social *milieu*. Men develop a capacity to dig their affections into each other as a matter of conscious choice, thus revealing a higher dimension to the human personality than what is revealed by his physical personality with its organic appetites and choices. This registers the beginnings of the manifestation of the spiritual man lying behind the physical man, of his higher self behind his lower self. All ethical theories presuppose this distinction between a higher self and a lower self in man; and the liberation of his higher self is what man achieves through ethical endeavour. It is renunciation of the lower self and manifestation of the higher self.

> Unless he erects himself above himself
> how poor a thing is man!

sings Wordsworth. Accordingly, what we see in all moral and ethical phenomena is a growth of man in a non-physical dimension; this is his spiritual growth, a growth in his inner dimension in which, as pointed to by Sir Julian Huxley in his lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision', quality emerges as the criterion of evolution for the first time, in place of quantity which dominated the organic or pre-human phase of evolution (*Evolution after Darwin,* Vol. III, p. 257):

> 'I spoke of quality. This must be the dominant concept of our new belief-system—quality and richness as against quantity and uniformity.'

Discussing the subject of utility against this new belief-system, Huxley says (*ibid.*, p. 259):

> 'Once we truly believe ... that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or TV sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary, but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, not an end in itself.'

And highlighting quality as the dynamics of human evolution, Huxley concludes (*ibid.*, pp. 260-261):

> 'Thus the evolutionary vision ... illumines our existence in a simple, but almost overwhelming way ... It shows us our destiny and our duty. It shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality.'

This is what Vedānta recognizes as the spiritual evolution of man, as his inward journey to fulfilment in the context of his outward life and movement and action.

8. *The Spiritual Growth of Man*

This subject of the spiritual growth of man is a fascinating theme relevant to the contemporary world situation, and more so to man in the Indian context today. It will point out to him the way to rescue himself from the tyranny of the sensate and the quantitative, and from the prevailing stagnation of worldliness, and help him to continue his evolutionary march to qualitative richness and fulfilment.

Physical growth we understand; intellectual growth also, though less obvious, we can understand; but what is this other growth, the moral and spiritual growth of man? It is something subtle, yet real, and more significant than the other two, so far as man is concerned. Moral awareness, with its capacity for love and service, is the direct fruit of this spiritual growth. This growth registers itself as an expansion of man's interests and sympathies so as to embrace increasing numbers of fellow human beings, and in the consequent extension of the frontiers of his own self. Without this growth, man's body becomes the prison of his self; with this growth, it becomes the first instrument of human evolution, of man's journey to fulfilment.

With the evolution of the higher brain in man, organic or physical evolution has ceased to have any further relevance so far as man is concerned. With the inventive powers of his higher cerebral system, man can produce organs and tools far more efficient than what nature may evolve within his organism at her slow pace through her trials and errors and enormous waste. Evolution has become self-conscious in man with his whole host of new capacities like reason, imagination, memory, and will. If organic evolution is thus irrelevant at the level of man, and if evolution still continues in him, it has to be sought beyond the organic or physical level. This is the meaning of what Julian Huxley refers to as psycho-social evolution. It is conscious social participation that makes an individual grow even into a personality, a value which no animal can realize.

Biology speaks of the principle of homeostasis, or homeorhesis by which nature effected an automatic stabilization of internal conditions in the organism of the higher mammals. This helped in the slow evolution of the brain until, in man, she perfected the higher brain. The organism's need for physical survival and organic satisfactions, and her own need for numerical increase—all these have been relegated by nature to the care of man's lower brain, thus releasing his higher brain to function as the most wonderful instrument for carrying evolution to its specifically human fields, namely, the psycho-social, moral, and spiritual.

The capacity and fitness of the higher brain to undertake and fulfil this high function is directly proportional to its freedom from slavery to man's sensory apparatus and its appetites, to the pressures and pulls of his lower nature. The higher brain, with its powers of reason and imagination, may stultify itself by functioning as the tail-end of the sensory apparatus. It may, on the other hand, redeem itself and also man by becoming true to itself, by becoming truly higher. It is ethical discipline, what Vedānta calls *śama* and *dama*—discipline of the mind and the senses—that helps the higher brain to thus redeem itself and become the agent also of man's redemption. This is reason in its true form, what Vedānta calls *buddhi*. Referring to the evolutionary significance of this development of the higher brain, in his book *The Living Brain,* neurologist Grey Walter exclaims (p. 18):

> 'For mammals all, homeostasis meant survival; but for man, emancipation.'

This, the spiritual growth of man, is thus a fact; the more we know the science and technique of this growth, the better for us and for our nation. Physical and intellectual growth we know and recognize, the second less palpably than the first. A baby is born with about seven pounds of body weight. Every day it increases in weight. It drinks its mother's milk, to be followed by other types of food and drink; and it grows steadily until it becomes a full-grown healthy man or woman of 150 to 200 pounds weight. That is the palpable physical growth of man; and we ensure it by appropriate means of physical nourishment. Equally important, though less obvious, is his mental growth. A village boy is timid and without confidence. He is sent to school. Within a few weeks, he gains in knowledge, in alertness, in self-confidence. He develops a sense of his individuality; and this continues until he becomes, may be, an intellectual giant, or giant of will; this is the mental growth of man, which we ensure through appropriate mental nourishment, through education, institutional and non-institutional. These two types of growth, are necessary, but not sufficient. There is a third growth, most vital and significant, but least recognized, without which the other two will prove his undoing; without which his search for fulfilment will result in unfulfilment and defeat. This is his spiritual growth, which finds expression in ethical awareness and social feeling to begin with, and finds its consummation in the experience by him of the infinite, universal, and divine dimension of his personality, the Atman.

9. *Intellectual Giants versus Moral Pigmies*

An education that does not stress this spiritual growth may produce physical and intellectual giants who may as well be moral pigmies; this is what India calls the *rākṣasa* type of men, physically strong, intelligent, and of strong will, but all this held in thraldom to his finite, lower self, to his sensate nature; it is not oriented to his larger self through moral sense and social feeling. In fact, this is the defect also of our contemporary Western civilization. According to some modern thinkers, modern civilization creates intellectual giants and moral pigmies. So what is the difference? The difference is precisely here. The body has grown, the mind has grown, and yet the real man has remained a puny, tiny thing; it has failed to grow for want of the spiritual nourishment relevant to its growth. So the spiritual stature of man, his spiritual nourishment and growth, is not a mere academic subject; it is a vital subject for man individually and collectively. Civilization cannot survive without this spiritual growth of man from out of himself. In India, our great philosophy of Vedānta emphasizes the spiritual quality of human life. It proclaims that man is essentially divine. He is not the body; he is not the mind; he is the Ātman, infinite and universal. The body and the mind are only the instruments of his spiritual growth, the means of his life purposes, which include sense pleasures and aesthetic delights, intellectual developments and ethical awareness, and the fullest realization by him of the freedom of his inborn divine nature.

10. *The Nature of Ethical Awareness*

This spiritual growth of man finds its first expression in ethical awareness, in social feeling, in a genuine concern for the other individual. The society of human beings constitutes the *milieu* of his spiritual education, of his spiritual growth and development. Man lives in two environments, the natural and the social, but most people recognise only the first and not the second or rather, treat the second as but an appendage of the first. But the second is something distinctive. Nature around us, with its starry heavens, with its rivers, mountains, trees, houses, tables and chairs, constitutes the first environment in which we conduct our lives; man exploits this environment for his purposes; and it is meant to be so exploited, for it has no purposes of its own. A table is meant to be used by man; so also the house, so also the earth and the air, the rivers and the mountains.

But the second environment in which human life is cast, without which human life will become elementary in its proportions, is the social environment, constituted of other human beings. This is an essential environment for the growth of the human spirit. Take a man away from society, he will become like Ramu, the wolf-boy of your city; he will not grow into a human personality for want of conscious participation in the social environment. Therefore, the importance of the social *milieu* is recognized in all ethical philosophies, in all social and political thought. What does it involve to have a social *milieu?* I live in an environment constituted not only of natural objects and processes but also of other human beings. What are these other human beings? *It is this question and man's answer to it that constitutes the challenging problem of inter-human relationships.* Man's adequate response to this challenge raises his life from the organic or the physical, to the ethical and the spiritual levels.

Every human being treats himself as a subject, as an end-value, and treats everything else as an object, as a means to that end-value. That is human experience in the raw ethically unprocessed state. The table and other things are objects; and I am the subject. This idea that objects serve no purposes of their own, but are meant to serve the purposes of a subject is recognized in the dictum of the Sāṅkhya philosophy quoted by Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Brahmasūtras: saṁhatānāṁ parārthatvāt puruṣasya*—'All *samhatās,* i.e. objects which are but combinations of elements, do not serve their own purposes, but are meant to serve the purposes of a subject, namely, man.'

11. *Recognizing a Subject in a Social Object*

Now when I apply this idea to myself, I recognize that I am that subject, and everything else belongs to the category of the object meant to serve my purposes. But *when man extends the application of this dictum from the natural to the social environment, he commits a serious ethical blunder; he becomes the exploiter of his fellow human beings*. He considers his wife to be an object, he treats his children as objects, so also his servants and all other human beings. Therefore *this tendency to exploit other human beings proceeds from the failure to recognize the distinctiveness of the social environment from the natural environment*. Wherein does this distinctiveness lie? It lies in the unique fact that other human beings constituting the social environment are not just objects, are not just extensions of his natural environment, but are subjects like oneself; *ethics therefore asks man to detatch himself from his physical self and to view the social environment as it is in itself*. This detachment helps him to liberate his higher self and view his social environment objectively. He then discovers that that social environment consists not of objects but of subjects like himself.

This is the discovery that led man to culture and civilization, to ethics and spiritual realization, that led him on the specifically human road of evolution. Therefore, ethical attitude can be defined as *the recognition of a subject in a social object*. There are two types of objects, natural objects and social objects. Social objects consist of human beings, and when I recognize the subject in a social object I express my ethical sense, and I begin to treat that social object not as means to my ends, but as an end in itself. With the development of ethical sense, man also learns to treat all non-human living things more and more as ends in themselves. *This at once involves a revolutionary change in inter-human relationships*. Whereas, as an object, man exploited man just as he exploited his houses and furniture, rivers and mountains, as a subject, with ends of its own, man *serves* his fellow man and helps him to realize his own ends. Each man becomes, at the same time, the means and the end with respect to the social environment, revealing the truth of mutuality and inter-dependence underlying that environment. *This is the truth that humanity has failed to realize adequately from the very beginning of history*. Barring a small minority of ethically sensitive people, most human beings have treated and still treat other human beings more as mere objects to be exploited than as subjects to be served to realize their own ends.

12. *Service: Its Mood and Temper*

Therefore, ethics comes to us with a great message, the message of interdependence, the message of mutual service. It proclaims that if one wants to achieve his own welfare, he must strive to ensure the welfare of other human beings also. As exhorted by the *Gītā* (III.11): *Parasparaṁ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha*—'Cherishing and serving each other, may you achieve the highest general welfare'.

The German philosopher Kant defines ethical attitude in a beautiful sentence. Says he in his *Metaphysics of Morals* (London, 1909, p. 47):

> 'So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of another, in every case as an end, never only as a means.'

Each one is an end in himself; each one is also a means with respect to his fellowmen. In the light of this attitude, a study of inter–human relationships reveals the utterly unethical and low nature of all forms of exploitation of man by man. When man exploited woman in feudal societies, he treated her not as a person with ends of her own, not as a subject, but as an object meant to subserve his own ends. The same treatment was meted out by him to servants, labourers, and other sections of society. But today, in the context of our democracy, we are required to reverse this wrong attitude and practise and treat every human being as an end in itself. In this way, inter-human relationships become transformed, revealing the growth of man in a new dimension, namely, his spiritual dimension. And *the fruit, the by-product, of this growth is the temper and mood of service.* The spirituality of this mood and temper expresses itself as a sense of privilege with respect to work. It is my privilege to serve the ends of others through my work, proclaims this mood. The husband or the wife, parents or children, every member of a society, by being engaged in enhancing the happiness and welfare of others, enhances not only his or her own happiness and welfare, but ensures his or her own spiritual growth as well.

This also reveals a third environment in which man lives, namely, his inner environment, the world of his inner life, besides the other two, namely, the external natural and social environments. It is by taking due note of this third environment that man ensures his spiritual growth in the context of his external life and action. *Nourishment of his inner life is achieved through the spirit of dedication and service with which he inspires his outer life and action,* which then becomes transformed into *Yoga,* which achieves the double efficiency of social welfare, through productive labour outside, and spiritual welfare, through the inward spiritual attitude of dedication and service. This double efficiency—productive social efficiency outside and spiritual personality efficiency within—is the message of *Yoga,* according to the *Gītā* (11.50): *Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam*—'Yoga is efficiency in action', and not any cheap mysticism or magic. Service, therefore, is the only valid form of interhuman relationship in any society which aims, in the words of Julian Huxley quoted earlier, at 'the fuller realization of more possibilities by human species collectively and more of its component members individually '

13. *Worldliness versus Spirituality*

Whatever civilization and culture humanity has achieved so far, has been the result of the release of these spiritual forces in the hearts of men and women. Man is essentially spiritual, but this spirituality is lying hidden; it is lying unmanifest, and we have to manifest it in the context of our life and action, and develop a moral will. Any education which only quickens our intellect and sharpens our animal appetites, but does not help to develop a moral will, is harmful to man and society. Many civilizations have perished for this very reason. Our own history reveals to us many periods when man had decayed morally. Just before Buddha, conditions in the Indian society reveal a picture where the upper classes were steeped in luxury and self-aggrandisement and sterile philosophical speculations, and the lower classes were steeped in ignorance, superstition, and misery. It was then that India threw up a great teacher like Buddha. He saw that society had become stagnant, getting stuck up in the mire of worldliness; and he preached his message of spirituality, of renunciation and service, and it set the society on the road to progress and prosperity. His first discourse at Sārnāth after his enlightenment at Buddha Gaya bears a significant title, namely, *Dharmacakrapravartana Sūtra*—'The Discourse setting in motion the Wheel of *Dharma.*'

The wheel of *Dharma,* the wheel of society, the wheel of culture had got stuck up in the mire of worldliness, just like the wheels of a bullock cart getting stuck up in one of our muddy village roads. Then the cartman and others put their shoulders to the wheels and the cart starts moving. Similarly, Buddha came, put his shoulders to the wheel of society and made it move; the spirituality emanating from him and from his movement imparted dynamism to the society which had become stagnant due to worldliness and superstition, and for the next thousand years the dynamic energy of spirituality contained in Buddha's message made India march to prosperity and greatness, made her expand even outside India, and laid the whole of Asia in deep spiritual debt to our great country. This has happened several times in our history. And this alone accounts for the impressive continuity of our long history. Roman civilization developed this stagnation of worldliness in its later phases; luxury and love of ease sapped the vitality of its otherwise gifted citizens until a time came when Roman citizens were not prepared to work, to produce wealth, and to face any hardships, even in the defence of their glorious empire. They depended on mercenaries from neighbouring countries for the defence of their empire, and on the work of slaves and other people for agricultural and industrial production. And the result was that, when foreign invasions came, there was not the national will to defend the empire, and the whole civilization fell, never to rise again.

14. *Character Centred in a Socially-oriented Will*

These are all episodes from past human history from which we should take lessons and warnings. We are trying to build up a new state, a new society, on our sacred soil deriving its strength not from a minority of the elite, but from the millions and millions of our people. If our Constitution has anything inspiring about it, it is this that, for the first time in our long history, we are building the political structure of our nation on the willing consent, and on the strength thereof, of the millions and millions of our people of all classes, races, and sects and not of a minority at the top. The language of our Constitution is that, We, the People of India, give ourselves this Constitution. The Constitution is but the repository of our national vision and urge and the promise of great things to come. But we have to work hard to make promises flow into performances, to make vision flow into action and achievement. How can we do it unless we learn to work honestly, to work efficiently, and to co-operate with each other? And all such ideas of working together, co-operating with each other involve team spirit, which is the first fruit of the psycho-social evolution referred to by Julian Huxley; it betokens the beginnings of human spirituality, of the manifestation of man's higher self.

This is character centred in a socially-oriented will. With character comes mutual trust, cooperation, team spirit, and all-round efficiency. With character as his strength, a man is able to go beyond himself and dig his affections in the hearts of others and elicit a response from those hearts. With character-efficiency, therefore, a new man comes upon the scene. Character is the only basis of all enduring inter-human relationships. Take away character, the whole social structure tumbles down piecemeal. Vivekananda warned us more than seventy years ago against the tendency in India to mere imitation of Western institutions, Western ways of work, Western modes of life, without acquiring the character-efficiency which is the source of the strength behind those institutions. Addressing the citizens of Lahore in 1897 on the subject of 'The Vedānta', he said (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Vol. III, Ninth Edition, pp. 429-31):

> 'You may make thousands of societies, twenty thousand political assemblages, fifty thousand institutions. These will be of no use until there is that sympathy, that love, that heart that thinks for all; until Buddha's heart comes once more into India, until the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa are brought to their practical use, there is no hope for us. You may go on imitating the Europeans and their societes and their assemblages. ... Where is the heart here to build upon? No sooner do we start a little joint-stock company than we try to cheat each other, and the whole thing comes down with a crash. You talk of imitating the English and building up as big a nation as they are. But where are the foundations? Ours are only sand, and the building comes down with a crash in no time.
>
> 'Therefore, young men of Lahore, raise once more that mighty banner ot Advaita (vision of non-separateness), for on no other ground can you have that wounderful love until you see that the same Lord is present everywhere. Unfurl that banner of Love! Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached. Arise, arise once more, for

nothing can be done without renunciation. If you want to help others, your little self must go, In the words of the Christians—you cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. Have Vairāgya, renunciation. Your ancestors gave up the world for doing great things. At the present time there are men who give up the world to help their own salvation. Throw away everything, even your own salvation, and go and help others. Ay, you are always talking bold words, but here is practical Vedānta before you. Give up this little life of yours. What matters it if you die of starvation—you and I and thousands like us—so long as this nation lives?

'The nation is sinking; the curse of unnumbered millions is on our heads—those to whom we have been giving ditch-water to drink when they have been dying of thirst and while the perennial river of water was flowing past; the unnumbered millions whom we have allowed to starve in sight of plenty; the unnumbered millions to whom we have talked of Advaita and whom we have hated with all our strength; the unnumbered millions for whom we have invented the doctrine of *lokācāra* (social usage), to whom we have talked theoretically that we are all the same and all are one with the same Lord, without even an ounce of practice. ... *Wipe off this blot!* Arise and awake. What matters it if this little life goes? Everyone has to die, the saint or the sinner, the rich or the poor. The body never remains for anyone. Arise and awake and be perfectly sincere. *Our insincerity in India is awful.* What we want is character, that steadiness and character that makes a man cling on to a thing like grim death.'

15. *Imitation versus Assimilation*

We have to capture that; we have to assimilate the very 'root' of Western greatness, instead of merely imitating the Western people and running after the 'fruits' of their greatness. Only then can we develop our institutions patterned on theirs and bend them to our national purposes. They built their institutions on the basis of character, on the basis of ethical sense and social awareness and the character-efficiency flowing from them. This we have to develop first. Then only can co-operative societies, welfare organizations, and private and public sector projects, and all other collective undertakings thrive and flourish. Whatever constructive work we have done in India during the last sixty or seventy years, is entirely due to a section of the Indian people becoming inspired by this modern spirit of progress, by their acquiring this modern spirit of social awareness and its concomitant fruit of character-efficiency. Today our nation needs to develop this character-efficiency in a big way through acquiring this capacity to go beyond one's little self and manifest one's higher self. This is the only way to raise the moral tone of our people, to raise the spiritual strength of our nation. And this is the primary source of strength for man, says Vedānta, because it is intrinsic to him and capable of taming and elevating all extrinsic sources of his strength, namely, wealth, pedigree, and power. *Ātmanā vindate vīryam*—'through (knowledge of) the Ātman, man achieves great energy', says the *Kena Upaniṣad (II. 4)*. When life moves in this direction, service and dedication become increasingly spontaneous, outward, man-ward movements of that silent God-ward movement of the inner man.

16. *India: A Mighty Anthropological Laboratory*

Since our independence, our free state has instituted several services. We have over thirteen or fourteen central services and several ones at the states level. These are all specialized services meant for particular purposes. They have their relevance. But when we speak of service in the context of our society, we do not mean any one of these services. We mean the attitude to the work that one is called upon to do, the attitude to one's fellow citizens, the attitude to onself as a seeker of spiritual growth—the attitude which is blessed by spiritual awareness, ethical sense, and social feeling. *It is here that man reaches out to something beyond his limited truncated self;* it is here that evolution ceases to be merely organic and biological and rises to higher spiritual levels.

The whole of India today must be considered by each one of us as an anthropological laboratory, as a mighty sociological apparatus, for experimenting on the subject of man, his growth, development, and *fulfilment.* Our immortal spiritual tradition, Vedānta, aided by modern thought and modern techniques, provides us with the necessary guidance and stimulus in this great venture. We have to courageously face the task of nation-building through building up the manhood and womanhood of our five hundred and fifty million people. *This is the most exciting work for any intelligent heroic people.* We have to ask ourselves as to what type of society we want to evolve in India, what type of human excellence we shall aim for our people. Our people have suffered enough; they have been neglected, except for being exploited; the whole nation bears the impress of arrested growth through continual thwarting of human purposes, first by invaders from without, and then by invaders and exploiters bred from within. The harshness of our hearts has been the bane of our nation for centuries. The weak and the backward had no place in our society; they were always pushed to the wall.

This national sin, *this blot on our national honour,* in the words of Vivekananda quoted earlier, we have to wipe off today. That is the glorious opportunity and privilege for every educated citizen of free India. And *contemporary world conditions are extremely favourable and propitious for a successful assault, for the first time in our long history, on this ere-long impregnable fortress of selfishness and exploitation, ignorance and superstition; slavery and its concomitant of jealousy, all buttressed by a smug and static piety-fringed worldliness.* This amalgam of dark forces has undone our history and retarded our national growth for over a thousand years. That history teaches us one bitter and salutary lesson, *that our nation, during this long period, ceased to be the creator of history, but remained at the backyard of history. Other nations created history: we became victims of that history.* Our follies and our prejudices, our pettiness and our meanness, our want of political vision and wisdom. our incapacity to combine for a national cause—all these have militated against India's developing a strong body-politic for herself.

17. *Forging a Healthy Body for India's Eternal Ever-healthy Soul*

The soul of India is eternal; it is bright and pure and strong; the whole world feels the enlivening touch of that eternal India. I have myself seen, during my travels in various parts of the world, that eternal India is universal currency. Sensitive people in all parts of the world respect it and respond to it. It has been so throughout history. But there has been the other India, costituting the body-politic of that eternal soul, which has been an utterly inefficient conduit for the energy of that soul for hundreds of years. The world at large has been pitying us for the plight of our body-politic while admiring us for the strength and purity of our nation's undying soul. That body-politic has been getting weakened for want of suitable nourishment of body and mind. That weakness, and the period of stagnation that came in its wake, have left a legacy of mounting problems for the citizens of free India to tackle and to solve.

An adequate response to this tremendous national challenge will alone make the youth of India progressive and dynamic, and the hope of their nation's future. They must consider it their responsibility and **privilege** to tackle them. That will bring on the scene of India's national life a new type of men and women, with tremendous faith in themselves and in the people of India and in their past history and future destiny, with the will to work, and with the **capacity to co-operate with each other, in place of the talking,** shouting, selfish, cynical, and grumbling types that we have been turning out in thousands since our independence. This will mark the spiritual growth and expansion of India, matching its undoubted physical expansion, economic and demographic, ***and** make her once again the creator of history, both national and international.*

This is the expansive dynamic mind and mood that every educated citizen should capture today. For whatever we do now is going to shape the destiny of India, and much of the destiny of the world as well, for the next thousand years or more. This means that a tremendous responsibility is thrown on every one of us today. *With political independence gained after centuries of slavery and social immobilization, with a Constitution embodying the visions and urges of our nation for all-round human fulfilment to inspire us, with every type of freedom granted and guaranteed by that Constitution to nourish creativity and to stimulate the thought and action of every one of our citizens without any distinction, with an impressive* ***rational spiritual tradition from the past embodied in our Vedānta,*** *reinforced by spiritual giants like Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in the present, with a land richly endowed by nature with actual or potential wealth, with beautiful and impressive landscapes, and with a people richly endowed with diverse talents and capacities, our country today offers a most stimulating milieu for conducting, as referred to earlier, the fruitful laboratory experiment on human* ***growth and development for a seventh of the human race, and for*** *working out that 'science of human possibilities referred to by Julian Huxley and quoted in an earlier part of this lecture.*

18. *Meeting of East and West in Modern India*

In this great field of work we have two vital streams of blessings to help us, namely, our own immortal Vedāntic spiritual tradition and the modern Western tradition. From Vedānta we learn of the **eternal truth of the divinity of man and the solidarity of existence.**

From modern thought we gain the scientific and technological efficiency to make that Vedāntic vision practical. *For the fullest growth and development of man, there is need to effect a confluence of these two cultural streams in every citizen.* Man, his growth, development, and fulfilment, is the theme of all progressive thought today. It is the central theme of both ancient Vedānta and modern socio-political thought. Indian society has the opportunity to be fertilized by both the streams in the modern age. In fact, as pointed out by Vivekananda, *this precisely is the significance of the modern age in Indian history.* The assimilation of Vedānta and modern thought will make India great not only spiritually, but also intellectually, economically, and socially. And from her great historic past she will march forward to a future, greater and more creative than all her past ages.

Behind all such greatness lie two great forces, namely, *the force of creative intelligence and the force of character.* We did not lack intelligence as a people; but its cultivation was confined to a minority by short-sighted socio-religious policy. But in the absence of social awareness, we failed to achieve character-efficiency. And for the lack of character-orientation, our intelligence tended to be static, and failed to achieve creativity. During the past few centuries, we did produce men of vast learning, sometimes encyclopaedic in range, but mostly uncreative static, and sterile, which deprived it of the power to move society through the force of character and conviction. *Modern India offers the supreme opportunity to every one of her citizens to move in the direction of the achievement of these two energy resources of personality, namely, the force of creative intelligence and the force of character.* Man-oriented intelligence, feeling, and will is the source of character-efficiency in a man to whom the spirit of service comes as a natural by-product of his own psycho-social evolution, as a spontaneous expression of his own spiritual growth.

19. *Spirituality is Man's Birthright*

Vivekananda had warned us that man could not be made moral by an act of parliament. But since our independence, we have been trying to improve man mostly through acts of our parliament and of our state legislatures. That has been our great misfortune. And we have naturally failed. We have to realize today that the only way to change man for the better is through education, which is defined by Vivekananda, as 'the manifestation of the perfection already in man'. Such education is more than mere institutional schooling. *It is essentially what each man does to manifest his or her inborn spirituality and to evoke the same in others.* But our education today makes for mental stagnation and greater self-centredness. More or less that is true of contemporary education in all parts of the world. Self-centredness has become the central vice of modern civilization, says Toynbee. Sorokin, the eminent sociologist of the Harvard University, also warns us that modern civilization can be saved only by manufacturing a little more of altruism in the human heart. Bertrand Russell speaks of the need to have a little more of love in the human heart, if civilization is to be rescued from its present mess.

How to manufacture this altruism, this love, in the heart of man, how to develop this genuine human concern, is, therefore, a subject of more than national significance today. Technology cannot help us here. We cannot make men good and kind and altruistic by developing a new serum and injecting it into them. Science can denature plutonium, but it cannot denature evil in the heart of man, says Einstein. Neither can it be achieved, as I have said before, by acts of parliament. Nor can socio-economic improvements brought about by political and administrative measures, by themselves, produce the good man or the happy man. They at best constitute the *conditions* for the production of the good man or the happy man.

It is only by taking due note of the third or the inner spiritual environment of his life and ensuring its nourishment, by directly tapping his or her inner energy resources, by penetrating to the infinite resources of the spiritual depths of his or her personality, that man develops his ethical sense and moral awareness.

Buddha was endowed with infinite compassion and the spirit of service; these were not the products of the food he ate, or of the socio-political circumstances of his external life. He just *grew* into an infinite personality; he just *manifested* the inborn perfection of his nature, which is also the birthright of every human nature. External circumstances have relevance in the early stages of this manifestation in the case of ordinary people. But at some stage, man has to tackle himself, tackle the forces of life, and not remain a play-thing of external circumstances. *The knowledge and discipline of the forces of this inner world constitute the scope of the science and technique of spirituality, according to Vedānta.* Man has to take from the hands of mother nature the responsibility for his own evolution, for which he has been provided with the necessary equipments by nature herself. The failure to do this is the tragedy of man under modern social security philosophies. As predicted by Schopenhauer about a hundred years ago *(The World As Will and Idea,* Vol. I, p. 404):

> 'All men who are secure from want and care, now that, at last, they have thrown off all other burdens, become a burden to themselves.'

If there is one single teaching of Vedānta that needs always to be kept in view and that can redeem man from his inner emptiness, it is the teaching that man is essentially divine and perfect. Infinite energy is in the heart of every one. That is his birthright. He has not to beg it or borrow it from someone else. As our great political leader Lokamanya Tilak gave us the great political *mantra,* '*Swaraj* is my birthright', which galvanized our political life, so also this Vedāntic *mantra,* 'spirituality is my birthright', will galvanize the moral and spiritual life of every man and woman. Man's struggles in society for wealth and welfare, education and culture, have also to become the venue for another silent struggle within him, namely, the struggle to manifest his inborn spirituality.

This is the most precious and urgent lesson India has to learn today. The utter worldliness into which many of our people have fallen in recent times following the policy of 'I and mine first, and the devil take the hindmost', has only resulted in dwarfing the Indian personality and thwarting collective human purposes. This is what has made for the widespread indulgence by our people in all sorts of corruption and malpractices; we have invented many new forms of social malpractices which other nations even do not know. Today we indulge in all sorts of indiscipline, revealing a mentality of long-experienced slavery; for only slaves resent discipline, but free men never. The external freedom that came to us in 1947 has yet to grow into inner freedom in most of us.

These social maladies are the product of a view of man which reduces him to mere psycho-physical dimension, and in which the psycho-social man is muted. In that view, the spiritual man is nowhere in evidence. Ethical sense and social concern and the spirit and mood of self-discipline are the fruits of spirituality; and if we are to build our nation on enduring foundations, we have to build it on spirituality, and not merely on economic amelioration measures. This is what Vivekananda described as man-making with a view to nation-building. All politics and economics, science and religion, are meant to advance the cause of human growth and fulfilment. Unfortunately, since our independence, we neglected man in ourselves and in others, and concentrated on the external circumstances of his life. *We had thus devalued man long before we were forced by economic and other circumstances to devalue our rupee.* That is why we are in such a mess today.

20. *Our Post-Independence Generation*

A new India is coming up in the children of the present generation. They are unlike the children of the earlier generations; they are more intelligent, more vivacious, more alert, more fearless, and more straight-forward; these are sterling character assets. But they are deficient in social sense, in social responsibility, and in the concern for other individuals and groups; they exhibit more than the healthy level of intolerance and aggressiveness. The result is that they have become a problem to themselves and to the nation. The old, with their largely feudal mental make-up, can hardly become fit exemplars for our younger generation. From the lure of a dead past they have to be summoned to face the hardships of the living present and shoulder the responsible and creative roles of ushering in the delights of a glorious future. Their energies, now functioning like indisciplined elemental forces such as we experience in floods and earthquakes, need to be made creative by self-discipline through a nationally-oriented will. Our scientific technology is engaged in disciplining these elemental forces of nature to enhance human happiness and welfare. We need a similar spiritual technology to discipline the energies of our youths to enhance their own and the nation's welfare.

This is the ethical education of our children by which they are made *to feel the weight of social responsibility for the rebuilding of their national body-politic, by which they learn to give a creative and constructive direction to their enormous energies now expressing largely in destructive and self-cancelling ways, and by which they not only cease to be the despair, but become the shining hope, of the nation.*

Vivekananda summoned our nation, long steeped in *tamas,* inertia, which it foolishly mistook for *sattva,* dynamic calmness, to the dynamism of *rajas,* energy, before rising to the equilibrium of *sattva.* The nation has attained this *rajas* in its younger generation today. Vivekananda today whispers to every youth in India to move onward and raise his or her energies to the higher level of *sattva* through self-discipline and ethical sense. Energy at the *rajas* level is energy of the *rākṣasa* type, self-centred and self-cancelling. It is also often at the mercy of the lower *tāmasic* nature, when it becomes blind and purposeless and destructive. Much of youthful life-energy today suffers from this affliction of purposelessness and aimlessness. If continued too long, it will spell disaster to the individual and his society. The only way to make it creative is to make it grow to the next higher stage; it then comes under the discipline and control of the *sattva* level of human nature, *which then finds expression in a socially-oriented will with its mood and temper of renunciation and service.* This is the spiritual education of our youths which they must capture for themselves and by themselves, in the spirit of the heroic exhortation of Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (VI 5-6) instead of complaining that the state or society does not do this or that for them.

21. *The Timid versus the Heroic*

Somewhere, sometime, some groups or sections must become sensitive to the nation's problems, must respond to the nation's urge of survival, and reverse the prevailing downward trend and mood of despair, and start the nation on its onward march to confidence and hope. This signifies the igniting of the Promethean spark in some of our people, men and women endowed with firm convictions and the courage to live up to these convictions. Social problems often present themselves as vicious circles such as what are expressed in questions like: Does man create the social envioronment or does the social environment create man? The timid remain in them and just discuss them mutually, only to throw their hands up eventually in despair. They are bundles of opinions which, in the words of a scientist, are but the rattles of immature minds, and which have no power to move the world. *But men of the heroic mould transform opinions into convictions and develop the power of impact to break all vicious circles.* And they are the creators of history; they move onward and the nation marches behind them.

This is the force of character centred in a socially-oriented will. This was the blessing that man in India missed all these centuries. And this is the blessing that man in India received from its outstanding leaders like Vivekananda and Gandhi. This is the *vyavasāyātmikā buddhi* expounded by Kṛṣṇa in the second chapter of the *Gītā,* even a little bit of which can save a man or a nation from great fear: *Svalpamapyaṣya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat.* Whatever may be our productive deficiency with regard to food for the body —and even this is now being energetically tackled and overcome— the nation is not deficient so far as food and nourishment for the mind or soul is concerned. The tragedy is that, in this latter field, we are starving in the sight of plenty!

Modern India has the great blessing not only of lofty ideas but also of great men and women who lived these ideas. Apart from the great spiritual personalities like Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, we have had also in this age scores of outstanding men like Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar and Mahatma Gandhi, who were men of high character and great courage of conviction, and who lived in and for others more than in and for themselves, whose greatness was intrinsic, and not extrinsic as derived from their power or position in society. They give us an experience of human excellence, of the true glory of the human spirit. They teach us that to be selfish, to be self-centred, to exploit others, and die away one day, does not constitute human excellence, does not express the true glory of the human spirit. They preach to us in silence that to be manly and to stand on one's own feet, to extend the hand of fellowship to others, to use every ounce of surplus energy to bring happiness and cheer to millions of one's fellowmen—this is the true glory of man. As expressed by Vivekananda in a letter written from

Chicago in 1894 to the then Maharaja of Mysore (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, 1960 Edition, p. 141):

> 'This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive.'

Instead of striving to acquire this glory of manliness, the people of India, during the past few centuries, put the cart before the horse by striving to achieve the glory of piety and saintliness; and they lost both saintliness and manliness in the bargain. We clean forgot that true saintliness is built on the foundation of manliness only; where that manliness is lacking, the saintliness achieved becomes cheap and a sham. The *Gītā* had warned us about this but we did not take it to heart (III. 4): *Na karmaṇāṁ anārambhāt naiṣkarmyam puruṣośnute*—'Without the discipline of (life in the field of) action, man cannot reap the (spiritual) fruits of inaction (meditation).' Not only we failed to be saints, but, getting steeped in worldliness, we failed also to be men in the true sense of the term. Nothing else explains the centuries-long stagnation of our society and its accumulation of social maladies like poverty, social injustice, callousness, laziness, and the mood of resignation to evil. Vivekananda alone diagnosed in depth this malady of our national character; and he, therefore, exhorted the nation to develop manliness and strength and proclaimed manliness as the first phase of true spirituality. He became the preacher, for the first time since the *Gītā*, of 'a man-making education and a man-making religion'.

22. *The Gṛhastha Growing into the Citizen*

Service is the first fruit of such an education and such a religon, from which it issues spontaneously, naturally, without the feeling of being *forced* to sacrifice, and without expecting special external inducements to prop it up. *Herein we see palpably the spiritual growth of man and the dynamic march of evolution beyond the organic level.* Where this dynamic evolutionary movement is absent, human life gets stuck up in wordliness and becomes stagnant. Such stagnation is death, says Vedānta; and it is more to be feared than physical death. Sri Ramakrishna exhorts us to avoid this pitfall of spritual death; says he:

> 'Live in *saṁsāra* or the world; but allow not samsā*ra* or worldliness to get into you; that will make you stagnant. A boat will be on the water; that is its natural place;

but water should not be allowed to get into the boat; that will render it unfit for the purpose for which it is meant.'

In this illustrative teaching Sri Ramakrishna has compressed the entire message of social ethics and practical religion. It envisages the *gṛhastha* or the householder evolving into the citizen; it exhorts the biologically and physically conditioned man or woman to grow into the freedom and expansiveness of the spirituality of citizenship, which manifests itself as renunciation and service, *tyāga* and *seva. This is the type of men and women that we have to turn out in increasing numbers in our society today*. When we do so, we lay the foundations of the new democratic structure of our nation on rock. But today it has only sand for its base; and it is certain that, as remarked by Jesus in his parable, (Matthew. 7, 24-27) 'a building built on sand cannot stand.'

Today we have to ask this very question: On what base are we to build up the structure of our Indian national life? That structure is already rising here, there, everywhere, through our mighty developmental programmes in the fields of educational expansions, scientific research, industrial and agricultural development, defence, and social welfare. Within the next twenty or twenty-five years, we shall have solved many of our social problems, the problems relating to the environment in which human life is set. But one problem will remain and will become more intractable as we advance in the solution of our environmental problems. It relates to the great question as to what is the type of man that will come out of all this development? Is he going to be a clever, crooky person whose increased knowledge tends to the exploitation of other people? A worldly individual whose centre of gravity is always outside of himself and who has become stagnant in the world of sensate satisfactions? Or is he to be a dynamic person continuing his evolution in the psycho-social levels, who is thus sensitive to higher values and strives to realize them, and who has achieved, or is striving to achieve, the three-fold intergration between the diverse forces within the self itself?

This central problem of society, namely, the problem of human excellence, must be tackled from now onwards, the type of men and women that we want to see in the India that is emerging. If that India is to continue her glorious past into a still more glorious future, she will have to achieve a synthesis of the enduring elements of her own tradition with the finest elements of the Western tradition. This meeting of East and West was achieved in a big way in Swami Vivekananda. Every Indian citizen must achieve it in a measure in himself or herself. Vivekananda exhorts every Indian to strive in this direction (*The Complete Works,* Vol. V, Eighth Edition, pp. 29-30):

> 'Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and *we will do it. You are all born to do it.* Have faith in yourselves, great convictions are the mothers of great deeds. Onward for ever! Sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death—this is our motto."

What a noble vision of human excellence has been presented here! Every Indian citizen must strive to incorporate that vision in himself or herself as much as it lies in his or her power. Some may achieve it more, some may achieve it less, but every one has a common ideal of human excellence towards which he or she will be moving. This will provide a healthy direction to national energies and purposes, which will then cease to be self-cancelling and destructive, but become dynamic and creative. *Then will begin the march of India with steady steps and with sure and clear vision,* unlike the wobbly steps of her blind movements today.

This is the privilege and opportunity of citizenship in the sovereign democratic republic of India today. That citizenship cuts across all divisons based on caste, community, profession, sex, or social position, and is the focal point of unity, loyalty, and service for all the five hundred and fifty millions of the Indian people. The fundamental and inalienable personality of man in India is his Indian citizenship; every other aspect of personality is secondary, but this is primary. One may be a cultivator, another a shoe-maker; one may be an administrator, another a simple housewife; one may be the prime minister, another an industrial labourer; one may be the *Rāṣṭrapati,* another a simple school-master; and all these can be alienated and changed. But every one of them is integrally united to each other in his or her citizenship of free India. These are but the varied functions that citizens choose or are called upon to perform in the discharge of their citizenship privilege and responsibility. In the light of this, all work, from the shoe-maker's to the prime minister's, becomes transformed into service; the service of the nation, which views each of them as of national importance. The simple housewife discharges her national responsibility as a citizen by efficiently running her household, taking part in national affairs according to her abilities and limitations, and training her children in citizenship virtues and graces. Citizenship involves a sense of social responsibility, a will to rise above the limited biological self in conscious participation in the burdens and delights of society around.

This is the spiritual growth of man; and this modern concept of citizenship is essentially a spiritual concept in the light of Vedānta, in so far as it takes him out of the limited ego into the experience of ethical awareness and social feeling. A mere physically-conditioned *individual* becomes transformed into a *personality* by such conscious social participation. A mere householder becomes a citizen, registering thereby an expansion of awareness, identification, and sympathy beyond the physical and the biological. This is the man or woman in whom the political and ethical constituents of citizenship fuse into the human experience of spirituality, the spirituality of practical Vedānta. This is the central message of the *Gītā*. It is only on the strength of this citizenship, and the character-excellence it ensures, that we can strengthen the edifice of our democratic state, and add flesh and blood to the skeleton of our noble Constitution.

23. *The True Basis of Human Dignity*

Every one of us, therefore, in whatever fields of action we may be engaged in, is essentially a citizen of India; and, as a citizen, the only form of inter-human relationship that we can have is that of service. Whether we are administrators, doctors, lawyers, engineers, ministers, legislators, teachers, housewives, industrialists, or labourers, we must always remember that our primary personality is our citizenship of free India and that these are the functions which we perform in discharge of that citizenship responsibility. Earning a living thus becomes an integral part of the discharge of national responsibility, and subordinate to it. This attitude at once converts all action into service, or, in the language of Vedānta, all work into worship, the worship of God in man, the worship of the *Virāt*. The simple shoe-maker on the roadside and the mighty administrator in the secretariat, both are engaged in the service of society. Only, each has to be made conscious of this truth; that is possible only when each realizes his or her true dignity and worth. No work is high or low in itself; but our motivations make it high or low. Without the spirit of devotion behind it, the work of a temple-priest becomes low work; with the spirit of national service behind it, the work of the farmer or industrial labourer becomes high work; if motivated only by the three 'p's, namely, pay, prospect, and promotion, the work of the administrator becomes low work, static and humdrum. But when illumined by the spirit of national dedication and service. it becomes high and noble.

The spirit of service, therefore, raises all work, high or low in worldly estimation, into high work in the ethical and spiritual estimation, precisely because that spirit raises the worker behind all work to the high level of spirituality, to that level where man achieves a qualitative improvement in his life.

The spirit of service, therefore, becomes a universal milieu in which all human life and action are spiritualized. *This is the transformation that life and work undergo in the light of philosophy.* We need to be inspired by this philosophy in India today. This is what will strengthen India, make for national integration, and all-round national efficiency. This philosophy will impart to India a vision of high human excellence and the urge to actualize it in life and character. The real source of strength for a nation lies in this type of men and women endowed with *prajñā* or creative intelligence, and not in its treasury, in its defence organization, or in its foreign alliances, says Vidura in the *Mahābhārata; Yat balānāṁ balaṁ śreṣṭhaṁ tat prajñā balam ucyate.*

24. *The Ethics of National Integration*

National integration is the fruit of ethical awareness. Mere aggregation of individuals does not constitute a nation, just as mere accumulation of bricks does not constitute a buliding. It is cement that joins brick to brick to make for the integrated structure of the building. The cement that joins man to man to result in the integrated structure of a nation is ethical sense, or what the *Mahābhārata* terms dharma, as defined by Kṛṣṇa in the *Karṇa Parva: Dhāraṇāt dharma ityāhuḥ dharmo dhārayate prajāḥ*. The five hundred and fifty million people thrown together in this blessed land of ours do not automatically constitute a nation; we need an integrating principle or value that will unite man to man. That principle is ethical sense which we have to manufacture from within each one of us; for it is a spiritual value that man liberates in the context of his spiritual growth. Ethical sense cannot be manufactured outside man; it cannot be produced by payment of material and other inducements, or by the injection of a serum. So long as man is content to live in the stagnation of *saṁsāra* or worldliness, he cannot manufacture this value even if offered all material and other inducements. For, *this value is the product of man's spiritual growth, and that growth takes him beyond the tyranny of the physical and the sensate, beyond the tyranny of the delusion of worldliness which is 'I' and 'mine'*.

When this value is liberated in the hearts of increasing sections of our vast population, we shall witness a temendous phenomenon of human integration in about a seventh of the human race. It will convert India into *a national grid of awakened humanity,* just as we are taking all steps to achieve a national electrical grid for the industrial unification and development of our country. *This is enduring nation-building through man-making*. And the clarion call that can inspire us today is what Vivekananda has given to us from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad:* 'Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.'

25. *The Capacity for Impersonal Loyalty*

This glowing picture of what India can be tomorrow is marred by our knowledge of what she is today. The present is undoubtedly unpropitious; but it is the product of a long tradition of political unwisdom and moral stagnation of our people. Every citizen should be aware of this national weakness and consciously work to end it. We had established in India many political states in the past; a study of why and how they failed and why we failed to establish an enduring national state will contain many salutary lessons for us today. Our states of the past were ruler-centred. The heart of the state was the person of the king or the emperor. As at the top, so at all the lower levels also, it was the person in authority that counted, whether it be the commander-in-chief, the viceroy in the province, and such other functionaries lower down. The people's loyalty was to the person of the ruler or of the other functionaries below.

Our big country failed to develop either at the provincial or at the central level *an impersonal political loyalty* to an Indian state. Our loyalties became shaken with the death or removal of the person of the ruler, or the death or removal of the person of the commander-in-chief. Foreign invaders seem to have known this weakness of our people and of our state or states. It is not an isolated experience in Indian history of our national armies, fighting bravely against an invader, melting away when the king or the emperor or the commander-in-chief was killed during the battle. And foreign invaders would often aim their arrow or their shot at the king or the emperor or the commander-in-chief seated on the howdah. Such melting away of our armies has taken place even by the spread of false news to the same effect by the invaders. Not only the army and the people in general, but also the officers and the feudal lords failed to develop an impersonal awareness of, and an impersonal loyalty to, an Indian national state. Their loyalty was primarily to themselves and to their self-interest, and secondarily to the person of the ruler as a means to the former.

The lessons of the failures of our past efforts to build an enduring political state in India *should be burnt into the minds and hearts* of our people today. We must assimilate the truth that a strong and enduring political state cannot be built on the basis of mere personal loyalties. *We need to develop an impersonal loyalty to our new free national state and to the high principles embodied in its Constitution.* We need to develop a respect for our Constitution and an impersonal capacity to respond to the rule of law. With this impersonal backing, the sentiment of personal loyalty, which we have inherited in abundance, becomes an additional source of strength for national integration. We are slowly and painfully learning this lesson of impersonal loyalty to our infant democratic state. Whatever strength it has shown during the last twenty years of its existence, whatever strees and strain it has faced and stood, is derived from this source. Whatever weaknesses have shown themselves up, similarly, reveal only the long distance the nation has yet to travel to acquire this basic virtue, which we need not only to strengthen our political state, but also to strengthen, purify, develop, and ensure the continuity of all collective and institutional activities within the state.

It is not a rare thing in India to hear people say: 'I used to take keen interest in such and such an institution when so and so was its head, but now that he or she is gone, I have no further interest.' An institution represents a certain social vision and the effort at its realization. If our loyalty is to that vision, we would continue to bear witness to that vision by continuing to serve the cause of the institution even if circumstances have necessitated a change in the person at the head, involving, however, no departure in the ideals and programmes of the institution.

26. *The Capacity for Imaginative Sympathy*

The cultivation of this impersonal loyalty, however, involves a spiritual growth within man from the psycho-physical self to the psycho-social self. This proclaims the intimate relationship between ethics and all true politics.

By such impersonal growth, man becomes a richer personality, says ethics. It is this impersonal-personal man that constitutes the ethical content of citizenship, without which citizenship merely means that one has only to stand in the queue and wait until he or she attains the age of twenty-one. Unfortunately, this latter view of citizenship is what most people in India have understood and acted upon, and it has contributed not a little to the prevailing national weakness and despair. Nepotism, bribery, business malpractices, and other evils which are afflicting free India, have their source in the preponderance of blind *māya* over luminous *dayā,* and in the absence of that detachment from the worldly personality, in the absence of that spiritual growth into the impersonal, which alone endows one with mental clarity and moral strength to follow the path of justice when called upon to adjudge the claims between less qualified personal kith and kin and better qualified other persons. Attachment to oneself and to one's relative is *māyā* and love for all is *dayā,* says Sri Ramakrishna.

This spiritual growth of the citizen will not only enhance the spirit of justice in society—and justice is one of the most stabilizing and integrating social forces which alone can make individuals and groups accept gracefully the shortages and privations of a developing economy—but it will also enhance greatly the citizen's capacity for sympathy and fellow-feeling. During the past centuries, our character had for its ingredients a bundle of negative virtues instead of positive ones. Our traditional capacity for sympathy was as much limited and warped by this and by the personal factor referred to earlier, as was our traditional loyalty to the state. Our religious and social codes did teach us to be kind and sympathetic; but our response to human suffering was neither imaginative nor sustained. As a people, we did not fail to respond to suffering and distress in front; but this response took the form of tossing a coin or two to the sufferer and then passing on; it looked as if we did this more to be relieved of the sight of suffering than out of a moral concern to see that the sufferer's suffering is relieved. We did not care to follow it up to see that social maladies are traced to their very roots and eradicated. Nothing but this static sympathy could have come out of the prevailing static, piety-fringed worldliness and self-centred socio-political attitudes.

When we substitute a dynamic spirituality for that piety-fringed worldliness, and a deep social concern in place of our bundle of negative virtues and self-centred socio-political attitudes, we develop the capacity for *impersonal sympathy,* the sympathy of a wide-ranging and sustained quality. This is *imaginative sympathy*. It is not tied down to a concrete suffering in front, nor does it end up by the tossing of a coin to the sufferer. Imaginative sympathy proceeds from a deeper source in the human personality; it proceeds from its spiritual dimension from which dynamic ethical and social values proceed.

This is the personality of the citizen. Such citizens alone are the guarantee of social health and social progress. And when administrators are recruited from a social *milieu* which consists of a general body of such citizens, the administration becomes responsive to social urges and needs. The difference between a police state and a state aiming to be a welfare state lies in this social responsiveness of the latter. And this is the product of that spiritual growth of the members of the administration, yielding the precious capacity for impersonal sympathy, for imaginative sympathy. The secretariat and other institutional offices of the state are far away from the actual scenes of human life with its urges and privations. Yet the administrator. through his imaginative sympathy, recognizes, and responds to, that far away social situation. With his imaginative sympathy, he sees the file in front of him stirring into life and whispering words of human urges and aspirations. Every citizen needs to develop this rare capacity, but the administrator and the politician need it more. Without it, they both, singly or in combination, can turn a nation into a mess of problems; with it, they can lift a nation from the mess of problems to the sun-lit heights of cheer and hope.

27. *Dynamic Spirituality*

It is this transformation of man in India that will fill our politics and administration with a sense of urgency, with a sense of purpose and direction. *With this imaginative sympathy, things will move faster and faster in the administration, and the nation will march faster and faster towards its destined goal of general welfare.* It is the greatest asset for the administration of a state such as ours where the most glaring fact is its centuries-long arrested development, and the mounting urge, since independence, for the minimum of human happiness and welfare gushing out of the hearts of millions and millions of its people, who have been, in the pungent words of Vivekananda, ‘living the life of nextdoor neighbours to brutes’. The grasping of this fact and an adequate response to it by an administrator provides the finest, and the only, school for the development of his character and efficiency, and for the retention of his youthful zest and joy in his life and work.

This is the type of glory and greatness that should descend upon men and women in India in general, and the members of the administrative services of the centre and the states, in particular. It will make for the liberation of the spirit of service as a pervasive principle, lighting up the dark and dismal horizon of our nation today, and raising the spiritual quality of the life of its citizens. *To go here and there to be spiritual is like going here and there to breathe.* It is all *here* and *now*. We have to realize that spirituality is not magic or cheap mysticism, that it is not to be sought merely in caves and forests, but that it is the birthright of one and all, and is to be cultivated in the fields of one's life and work, in the midst of its ups and downs.

Our people need to be inspired by this practical and realizable ideal which Vivekananda has put before us in the modern age. He exhorts us that it is far better to live for an ideal for an instant than to lead for years the life of jelly-fish existence. As I quoted from the *Mahābhārata,* during my public lecture at the Ravīndrālaya last evening, the words uttered by queen Vidula for the benefit of her son, king Sañjaya, breathes a heroic message for all our youths (*Udyogaparva,* 120, 15):

Muhūrtaṁ jvalitaṁ śreyo na tu dhūmāyitaṁ ciram—'It is better to flame forth for an instant than to smoke away for ages!'

Some of the great men of India like Śaṅkara and Vivekananda lived short but intense lives. Theirs was an intense dedication to God and man, to God *in* man; and it changed the course of human history. It is better to live intensely for an ideal and vision than to vegetate for long years in a humdrum existence. *This is a powerful sentiment that can drive away the clouds of cynicism and frustration from the sky of India.* Every educated citizen has to teach himself or herself that he or she not only is *in* India but is also *of* India, and is responsible for the nation's well-being. We have to inspire ourselves with the conviction that we have been called upon to be an instrument of our nation's purposes. What can be a greater glory for man in India today than this, that he is living in the most creative period of his nation's history and that he is privileged to contribute to it, big or small. When cynicism and frustration lay their cold hand of death on a person, he or she is unable to respond to any higher value, and becomes suspicious of all values except one's own self-interest. Bernard Shaw refers to this type in a famous passage:

> 'This is the true joy of life, to be used for a purpose which you consider mighty; to

be a force of nature, and not a mere clod of ailments and grievances ever complaining that the world does not devote itself to making *you* happy.'

These are the two alternatives before man in India today. Here is the great current of Indian national life; I am a part of it, shaping its course and being shaped by its current, losing my smallness and meanness in that great national participation. But if I cut myself away from that current, I become a stagnant pool, swampy and malarious, a clod of ailments and grievances ever complaining that the nation has not done this or that good to me. 'All expansion is life, all contraction is death', says Vivekananda. More people have taken the path of spiritual contraction, bringing the nation to the verge of despair and disintegration. From now on, let more and more people take the path of expansion, expansion of social awareness and sympathy, and the capacity for calm, silent, hard work, inspired by team-spirit, and we shall arrest this downward trend and turn the nation to progress and prosperity, unity and strength.

28. *Bhartṛhari's Social Classification*

We can better understand the anatomy of our society today by listening to what poet-king Bhartṛhari says about the human types in a society. Bhartṛhari hailed from the Malwa region of neighbouring Madhya Pradesh and lived over thirteen hundred years ago. Says he in his *Nītiśataka* (Verse 64):

Eke satpuruṣāḥ parārthaghaṭakāḥ śvārthān parityajya ye,
sāmānyāstu parārthamudyambhṛtā svārthāvirodhena ye;
Te' mī mānavarākṣasāḥ parahitam svārthāya nighnanti ye,
ye tu ghnanti nirarthakaṁ parahitam te ke na jānīmahe—

'There are some *sat-puruṣas*, good people, who engage themselves in the good of others sacrificing their own self-interest; the *sāmānyās*, the generality of people, on the other hand, are those who engage themselves in the good of others so long as it does not involve the sacrifice of their own self-interest. There are those others, the *mānava-rākṣasās*, devilish men, who sacrifice the good of others to gain their own selfish ends; but alas, what am I to say of those who sacrifice the good of others without gaining thereby any good even to themselves or to any one else!'

The first category is that of the *satpuruṣa,* the good man. What does his goodness consist in? It is an overflowing goodness uncontaminated by any selfish motive. Such people always work to ensure the welfare of other people without caring for ,their own self-interest. This is the most glorious type in any society; they form its spiritual elite; they are, as the New Testament puts it, the salt of the earth.

Apart from those whom the world looks upon as divine incarnations, the *satpuruṣa* category includes men like Gandhiji. He might have remained a barrister and could have led a comfortable life. But he discovered himself in others and, dying to himself, lived for others. He dedicated himself to the work of rescuing from slavery and fear millions of his fellowmen, and making them realize the dignity and worth of their manhood and womanhood.

The poet then speaks of the second category—the *sāmānyās,* the generality of people—the majority in every society. What is their mental make-up? They serve the interest of other people so long as it does not collide with their own self-interest. That is what British ethical and political philosophy calls 'enlightened self-interest'. And the majority in any society will be of this type. And what India needs today is an intelligent appreciation and application of this philosophy on the part, especially, of her industrialists and businessmen.

They have to realize that it is in their own self-interest to see that the nation prospers and grows. Industry and business have to realize that a flourishing economy demands the widest diffusion of purchasing power among the people. Foolish ways of getting wealth by which the rich become richer and the poor poorer are destructive of the process of wealth-getting itself even in a *laissez faire* state. The difference lies precisely in this that whereas, in the latter, the motivation is *mere* self-interest, in the former, it is *enlightened* self-interest.

Ethics does not demand of this category of people that they sacrifice their self-interest to do good to others. It permits them to seek their self-interest; but it tells them to widen their concept of 'self' by fully grasping the truth of the interdependence of men and groups in society. If I keep my premises scrupulously clean, but do not care to see that the town or village in which I live is also kept clean, I cannot escape the consequence of an epidemic breaking out from that insanitation in my environment. It is therefore in my own interest to see that my environment is sanitary. As societies become larger in territories and population, the concept of 'self' in man's view of his self-interest needs to be correspondingly broadened. A narrow idea of self-interest is based on utter ignorance of the social mechanism, with its subtle interdepending processes. Hence it is *unenlightened* self-interest. This becomes more glaring as a society becomes more complex with not only national but also international inter-connections. Hence the need for raising self-interest to the level of the *enlightened* variety. This philosophy of enlightened self-interest is today inspiring international relations in such fields as the sharing of economic prosperity and technical know-how through trade and aid extended by advanced countries to developing countries. But it needs to be implemented much more within the national societies themselves, where all self-interest needs to be purified by the touch of *enlightenment*.

The poet then goes on to describe a third category which he characterizes as *mānava-rākṣasās,* devilish men. What is devilish about them? They destroy other people's welfare to gain more profit and pleasure for themselves. This is the *rākṣasa* type; and I am sorry to say that, since independence, we have been manufacturing this type in large numbers in our country. Every conceivable form of food and drug adulteration and corruption afflicts our nation today. What is the source of this affliction? Men and women out to gain profit and pleasure for themselves at the cost of misery and unhappiness to millions. Why do they do so? Because they have failed to grow beyond their physical, biological selves. They have sharpened their intelligence and will by education, but failed to give a moral orientation to them. Putting these great powers in the service of their lower selves, they have become efficient instruments of social evil and suffering; and this is what *mānava-rākṣasa* means. At this end, one of these people adulterates drugs to gain extra profit to himself; at the other end, the drug is administered to hundreds of children with no effect; the children suffer and die. But what does *he* care about the social consequences of his action! He cares only for the profit from his business, and is callous about its consequences to his fellow-men.

This is the *rākṣasa* type, a low type of humanity; but many of them are capable of being corrected by social and state action, and transformed into the second type, the enlightened self-interest category.

The poet can understand the ways and motivations of these three types of people; but he is at a loss to deal with the next, or the fourth category, and exclaims: *te ke na jānīmahe*—'I am not able to understand them!' Why? Because they believe in wanton destruction; they destroy other people's welfare even though they do not gain any benefit to themselves thereby. Every society contains a few such morally demented people. Our nation has a more than healthy share of this type also today.

This is the picture of human society everywhere. These four types are there in U.S.S.R., America, Japan, China and in all the countries of the world, as we have them here in India. The only difference is in the ratio of the four types. And this difference in ratio makes the difference between society and society.

As for the first type, the *satpuruṣa,* every society does have a small minority of this group, unselfish, compassionate, morally alert, and spiritually sensitive. Every society *must* zealously create and nourish this small minority. Every society will have a majority of its population belonging to the second type—the *sāmānyās,* motivated by self-interest, but of the enlightened variety. But every society should take steps—educational and preventive—to see that the ranks of the third category are thinned, if not entirely eliminated. And the fourth should be completely eliminated, it should never be allowed to rise again, As to the second category, there is great need for vigilance that it does not slide down to swell the rank of the third category by too much preoccupation with self-interest and too little with enlightenment. This group has to be specially alert to see that its self-interest is illumined by its being subjected to the larger interest of society. *The moral health of the nation entirely depends upon this immense group steadying itself by drawing inspiration from the small minority of the satpuruṣa group above it.*

I do hope that, as remarked by me earlier, the self-criticism which is evident in our nation today, and which is a sure sign of the basic health of our society, will slowly generate the necessary moral forces to cure the nation of its present ailments. *The ailment is a moral ailment and the remedy has to be a moral remedy.* We all desire that our nation should be healthy, physically as well as mentally. We have achieved some notable successes in tackling our physical diseases. We have practically conquered malaria which was such a scourge even two decades ago. We are on the way to conquer the scourge of tuberculosis, with leprosy next on the list. As a result of these measures, we have considerably raised the nation's life expectancy from about 29 to about 50 since our independence, besides improving the general health of the nation. *But the greatest challenge to the nation today is the malady that afflicts its mind and heart.* Cynicism, self-centredness, and utter unconcern for others are more deadly than the most deadly physical diseases and the viruses that cause them; for *they corrode the nation's resolve to be free, to be united, and to march onward to progress.* We cannot be blind to the fact that this disease has already invaded our body-politic, including our youths. We have to take energetic measures to arrest the further progress of this disease and to eliminate it from the body-politic. And the nation has to be alert thereafter to see that these deadly mental viruses do not invade our society again. This is the responsibility of every patriotic citizen. We have no king or emperor ruling over us today as in the medieval and other periods. We live under a democratic set-up which derives its strength from its free, disciplined, responsible, and responsive citizens, to whom service of the nation is politics and religion in one, and in whom the nation has its guarantee of unity, strength, and continued progress.

29. *Conclusion*

The subject of the philosophy of service, therefore, is not meant for academic discussion in the dull philosophy courses of our universities; it should stir the minds and hearts of every section of the population. It is thus that the nation will get the necessary strength to meet the recurring challenges that his age of revolutionary transition will throw at it. *If India succeeds in responding to these challenges adequately, she will become a beacon of hope not only to* *herself but also to the whole of humanity.* We have responded successfully to many a challenge to our national existence and integrity in our long history. And we shall face and overcome this challenge as well. With this faith in ourselves and in our national destiny, let us, from this day onwards, enter our respective fields of life and activity with hope and courage.

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HUMAN EXCELLENCE*

1. *Introduction*

I am glad to find in Bombay a group trying to encourage excellence in all spheres of life. When I was asked to come and speak here, I immediately wrote back from Calcutta saying that I loved this particular programme and I would be very glad to come and meet the members of this Indian Centre for Encouraging Excellence and speak under its auspices. The subject suggested was the pursuit of excellence. For all these years, I have been pondering over and talking on this subject in the context of our society and the transformation that is going on around us at an increasing pace ever since we attained our independence. But the trends visible on our national horizon today are such as to make us despair of the type of man or woman that is coming upon the Indian scene. And it is here that every lover of India must pause and consider where we are going.

2. *Need for Positive Thinking*

All over India, we spend hours and hours together to discuss the foibles of our society; but, side by side, it is good to engage in some positive thinking also and ask ourselves how we can correct these foibles, how we can reverse this trend towards disintegration, and create a better type of man and woman in India. Any activity with this objective in view is highly desirable and urgent at this time. Every father and mother must be deeply concerned with the type of society in which his or her children will have to grow and develop. Unless we provide the necessary stimulus, we shall find our younger generation developing twisted personalities. This is already taking place in a big way here as well as elsewhere and, if we have no better ideas in India to offer, we shall have to throw our hands up in despair. But don't we have them? *The fact is we do have profound ideas to offer from our own heritage, as also from the heritage of the West.* If these ideas are presented to our people, a new pursuit will appear on our social horizon.

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* Address at the meeting organized by the Indian Centre for Encouraging Excellence, Sahakar Bhuvan, Bombay-77, on 9 March 1968

3. *The Pursuit of Human Excellence*

We indulge in so many kinds of pursuits in India to-day, of which the most important, and, to many people, the only one, is the pursuit of wealth. The pursuit of wealth, the pursuit of pleasure, and the pursuit of power, these three pursuits have frozen our hearts all these twenty years of our post-independence existence, and have almost destroyed the creative spirit of the people and taken the nation to the brink of disintegration. This evil tendency can be reversed only by a new pursuit which will help to purify all other pursuits and destroy whatever is evil in them; *and that new pursuit is the pursuit of excellence.*

It is because I found in you a group that is interested in this new pursuit that I immediately agreed to participate in your work and to think together with you on this important theme; for it is only in these small groups that we can do effective thinking and speaking. In fact, human society has been described by biologists as an 'interthinking' species, the only such species in nature. So when men meet together, when men think together, and think with a creative purpose and direction, they generate a certain type of energy which has wholesome impact on society. Our greatest misfortune has been that there has been of late so little of thinking. There have been passion, frenzy, and frenzied utterance and frenzied action. Calm, silent thinking has all but disappeared even from the highest quarters, including, alas!, from our centres of higher learning, namely, the universities; and that is the sure way to national degradation. No nation achieved greatness without a capacity to think calmly and to think far ahead as to the type of men and women its society would like to have. This degeneration arising from our refusal to think calmly has cost us dear, and several sensitive people in various parts of India have become conscious of the resulting dangers ahead. They have started to think individually and collectively and to ask the question: Where are we going? What is the corrective to the present-day negative trends? And it is in these small inter-thinking groups that we can profitably discuss social problems calmly and profitably and thus help to reverse this downward trend.

The first important consideration before us is the problem of man in Indian Society. What is the type of human excellence that we want to see in India? It is very necessary to ask these questions and find the answers. Thus only can social energies be helped to develop a purpose and a direction, without which these energies function in self-cancelling ways. Much action, much movement, but with little progress will be the result of not giving direction to social energies. At present most people live what we may call *ad hoc* lives, day to day, hour to hour, without any distant horizon appearing before them, without the lever of a great ideal or purpose; and that is dangerous to any civilization. Whenever a civilization has developed this *ad hoc,* day-to-day mentality, it has destroyed itself. The powerful Roman civilization got destroyed when the people of Rome started living day-to-day, hour-to-hour lives, without any distant horizon coming into view, without farsight and fore-sight, though in earlier centuries, the Roman society and state had a tremendous sense of purpose and direction.

This lack of direction is affecting several nation's today such as Britain, Germany, Japan etc. In Britain, for example, there is this want of purpose and direction after the Second World War. The tremendous purpose that the British boy or girl had 200 or 300 years ago has exhausted itself and no new one has replaced it. 'How can Britain find a new place for itself in this altered post-war world?', was the general theme of a recent series of talks over the B.B.C. under the title 'Britain Today'. Until Britain finds it, the British child will be living an *ad hoc* life and the British people will be plagued with problems which are inherent in this *ad hoc* life.

4. *Human Excellence in Vivekananda*

In our case, the situation is somewhat different. We have a long and impressive history, a very rich cultural tradition; and our great thinkers have plunged into life and into the heart of experience and given us visions of human excellence which can inspire any culture or civilization. But for centuries together, we failed to live up to these visions and we became stagnant; and from that stagnation we were rescued by our contact with the modern Western culture. As a result, for over a hundred years now, our society has been passing through the tremendous experience of a renaissance, a real renaissance, in the course of which we have been reassessing our own inherited values and comparing them with the values which we have received from the West. A few great minds in India have been able to get a grip on our great national tradition and assimilate into it the tested elements of the Western tradition; and they stand as the great path-finders for the rest of the Indian society; for they synthesized in themselves the finest excellences of character of both the East and the West and demonstrated to the nation that this modern transition in India can be made purposive and fruitful if the Indian child is given the guidance to understand the dynamic nature of the modern transition in India and to assimilate the two elements in its character.

Among these thinkers, the first is Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who really pursued excellence all his life; he was the finest product of the early phase of the modern renaissance in India; his life touched our emerging national life at several angles and he brightened everything he touched. He can be said to be the morning star of this modern Indian renaissance. He came to us in the beginning of the last century; and towards its end came another remarkable figure, Swami Vivekananda, *in whom was seen the East and the West in such perfect blend that his excellence of character bore the mark of universality*. The West and the East could feel at home in his presence. That was a lofty achievement; though we all may not achieve that fullness, it is essential that every child in India is initiated into this new struggle to achieve a measure of that synthesis of excellence in his or her character.

5. *Education for Human Excellence*

That is, or ought to be, the purpose of our national education—to turn out citizens who are citizens of this age, not of a bygone age, who breathe the spirit of this age, an age which has so much to contribute to human fulfilment; we live in an age where no nation can live in isolation, no man can remain tribal and provincial. We need to open up our hearts and minds to the best that the world has to give us; and the world has much to give us. This age, therefore, is the age to achieve a new type of excellence, an excellence where men and women are developed and nourished with the best the world has to give. This is available to us in India today both in our ancient traditions and in their modern interpretations by outstanding personalities. No other nation has this great privilege today, the privilege to have had outstanding guides and teachers who stand forth as representatives not of this nation or that nation but of the entire mankind.

Human excellence is the constant theme of Swami Vivekananda. We may speak of Indian excellence, Western excellence, or any other excellence. It had a reference and relevance up to the last century. Today we want to see *human excellence* in our children. *'Are you a man?'*, Vivekananda asked again and again. 'I do not care to know to what religion you belong, I do not care to know to what race or to what community or what nation you belong. But are you a man?' That is a very basic question. What better inspiration can we give to our children than to initiate them, when they are in their formative years, into this great *mantra* of manhood and womanhood? Vivekananda repeatedly said: 'We want a man-making education, we want a man-making religion.' These are his great words: *Man-making education, man-making religion*. What did he mean thereby? 'Stand on your feet and be men and extend the hand of help and strength to your fellow-men', said he. These great ideas have come to us as a fresh breeze because, for centuries, we had lost this concept of excellence of character.

6. *The Lure of the Three 'p's!*

And now you have newly started this movement for encouraging excellence. I said earlier that, during the last twenty years, we had said goodbye to all concepts of human excellence except the pursuit of three 'p's, namely, the pursuit of pleasure, of profit, and of power. Why is it that we are lacking in the heroic spirit of adventure to develop excellences of character, of efficiency, and of social concern? Why have we become like fresh blotting-papers trying to absorb as much of the ink of power, the ink of pleasure, and the ink of profit as possible, after independence? There is a social history behind it.

By and large, the object of human life presented to the Indian people during the last few centuries was so high, so transcendental, that it left millions of our people, all except a small minority, ill-nourished, and often wrongly nourished, because it had no message for them and was indigestible to them. Religion, understood as a means to *mukti or mokṣha,* spiritual liberation, is a subject that concerns only a small minority of the human population; but there is another concept of religion understood as character-efficiency, of social concern and social service, all that we call *ethical* excellence; this was not stressed. We stressed the other-worldly excellence, but not those positive virtues and graces that constitute an activist ethics and that make for a fuller realization of human possibilities, individual and collective, and a decent life for all. The result was that we failed to achieve not only the high ideal of *mukti* or spiritual liberation, but failed also to strive for the more attainable ideals of character, efficiency, and general well-being. To climb the Mount Everest of *Mukti,* one must first conquer the several foot-hills of lesser and more easily attainable ideals. Those who fail to do so, fail in their worldly as well as spiritual lives. The *Gītā* had warned us:

Na karmaṇām anāraṁbhāt naiṣkarmyaṁ puruṣosnute—

'Without the prior discipline of work, man cannot profit from the discipline of meditation.'

Our education did not aim to produce in us the virtues and graces of a citizen. That is a new concept of human excellence to us, or a new understanding of an ancient concept of human excellence as expounded in the *Gītā*. The citizen is a person, and not a mere individual. A person, as defined by biologist Sir Julian Huxley, is an individual who transcends his mere organic individuality in conscious social participation. He lives in a society of other human beings; he responds to them and seeks responses from them; and, in the process, he develops a type of character and excellence which has a tremendous spiritual appeal in it.

7. *The Gṛhastha Growing into the Citizen*

That was something worth aspiring for. But we failed in raising this kind of citizen, because, as I said, the inability to grasp the high spirituality of the *mukti* ideal bent men's energies towards the pursuit of an other-worldly salvation in the shape of a *post-*

mortem excellence; whatever we shall gain, we shall gain after death; this world we let go. That became our generally-practised philosophy. But by letting the world go, it does not go; it is there; and I am also there. Man and his fortunes here below were forgotten and neglected and the challenge of the excellence that would initiate the process of man-making to result in nation-building, by the *gṛhastha* or householder *spiritually growing into the citizen,* was largely ignored.

What must be realized is that the techniques that are relevant in the direct pursuit of *mokṣha,* in the pursuit of what we may call higher spirituality, cannot help us in the particular field of inter-human relations which is the field of ethics and the first stages of spirituality. The technique of the former is the way of meditation and inwardness. The technique of the latter is the training of the body, the senses, and the mind in the context of our natural and social environments through the technique of work, the technique of social action. By pursuing the first, exclusively, for centuries together, we did produce a few great saints and a certain measure of inwardness in our people; but by neglecting the second, we destroyed the real basis of human character, of efficiency, of that pursuit of excellence in the social context, which treats society as an interacting body of men and women, and the field for the training of a socially-oriented will and for the enjoyment of the delights of social existence.

We failed to develop social virtues and graces; we became highly individualistic and ultimately self-seeking, placing 'I and mine' in the forefront and letting the devil take the hindmost. That became the ruling motto of our day-to-day action. This is writ large in the character-deficiency of our people in all parts of India and in our political and social history of the past few centuries. Our sad incapacity to concede to the other man is the outcome of this. 'My views must prevail', 'I have no need to respond to the other man'—these became the ruling sentiments. A second failure was the incapacity to respond to the other man in a mood of 'what can I do for you?' 'How can I serve you?' A society which turns out such people in abundance must also expect troubles in abundance, because when it is a question of each man unto himself and the devil take the hindmost, the devil does not need much temptation. He will readily come in. As a Turkish proverb says: 'The devil tempts the good man, but the bad man tempts the devil.' We tempted the devil to come and destroy us. And he all but destroyed us. Until we change this philosophy, this outlook, which holds 'What I say alone counts, I don't care for anybody', there is no hope for us at all. Merely asking people to do this and that or flinging a copy-book maxim at them, cannot save us today. It is the real understanding of human growth, a new understanding of basic human excellence, and the struggle to achieve it in the context of interhuman relationships—these alone can help us to change our evil tendencies into good ones. And here I want to lay the utmost emphasis on two things: One, the social context of human excellence; and two, the importance of work, of work done in a team-spirit.

These are two important values which we need to stress if we desire to reverse the contemporary trends towards national weakness and disintegration, if we hope for the evolution of a better type of human being in our Indian society.

8. *Meditation versus Social Action*

As I said earlier, in higher spiritual life and in other-worldly religious pursuits, we follow the technique of social withdrawal and meditation. Meditation is a lofty spiritual experience, so lofty that anyone who pursues it will be able to show the finest excellence, provided he has the capacity to digest that technique. But most people have not got the capacity to digest the technique of social withdrawal and meditation and achieve spiritual excellence, without the aid of a prior social discipline. Failure to acknowledge this was a great fault of our society; and we have persisted in it.

A Buddha could sit in meditation and a few others like him could also do so and reap the highest fruit. But to millions of human beings, meditation became merely an excuse either for laziness or for sleep or for both, and much of the religion as practised in India is laziness and sleepiness. The average man or worker in India does not exhibit a sense of energy and alertness; not that he has not got the intelligence, but his psychic energy is immobilised by a wrong understanding of religion. He asks himself, 'why enter into this mess, why not stay out and save oneself from it all?' So there is that constant pull-back as it were. When one sees some of our people working in our offices and farms and factories, one gets the impression that most of them are half asleep all the time! One does not notice a sense of energy, a sense of direction, of self-confidence, because all this has been blighted by a continuous impact of the philosophy which is instilled into them that all activity, even physical life itself, is meaningless. The popular belief that tasks can somehow be achieved by closing one's eyes, by looking inward and not outward, by even some magical intervention, militates against the development of character-excellence. When you close your eyes, you close your eyes to the world around you—to wife, husband, father, mother, and neighbour—they all cease to exist then, you are alone to yourself. It is a lofty idea and experience if one can digest true inwardness; but millions could not digest it; it became toxic to them; and it debilitated society and also debased a great ideal and techique; a true religious impulse has been brought to the low level of self-centredness, pettiness, meanness, and also selfishness and laziness. Much harm has been done to our understanding of the true scope and meaning of religion. A German poet has a verse which best expresses the resulting weakness which has afflicted the Indian mind during the last few centuries. It says: 'Sweet is sleep, death is better, but it is best never to have been born!

9. *'Face the Brute'*

An Indian would rather avoid a problem than confront it boldly. His weakness lies in his refusal and incapacity to face it, though his philosophy as taught in the *Gītā* tells him that that is wrong (II. 3):

Klaibyaṁ māsma gamaḥ pārtha naitattvayyupapadyate;
Kṣudraṁ hṛdaya daurbalyaṁ tyaktvā uttiṣṭha parantapa—

'Yield not to unmanliness, O Partha; it does not befit you; forsaking this mean faint-heartedness, stand up, O hero!

'Face the brute' is the message of Vivekananda, exhorting man to manfully face his problems and overcome them instead of running away from them. By running away from them, they do not cease to exist nor do we become freed from their pressures and challenges.

But that is a new philosophy of human excellence; but not new in the sense that it was not there. It is there fully in our literature, especially in the *Gītā,* and today, in the literature of Vivekananda. It is reinforced by a powerful philosophy that has come to us in modern times, namely, the Western philosophy of human excellence, where any problem is a challenge to human intelligence and to the human spirit. It does not make man run away; it makes man face life's challenges. If there is an unclimbed peak, it challenges man to climb it. If there is an ocean depth untouched, he must go and touch it. This is the spirit of man, ever striving, ever struggling, overcoming obstacles, establishing the domain of man over everything else.

This is the new type of human excellence, new for us at least since a few hundred years. We had it earlier. The greatest message of that heroic human excellence, of manliness, of strength, was given to this nation nearly 3,500 years ago and it has never been bettered since then even by Western ideas. That is the message of the *Bhagavad-Gīta.* If there is one literature that speaks of man as the conqueror of obstacles, of the human spirit that can overcome every difficulty, it is the *Gītā,* where manliness and strength are the two cardinal values which are integrated with the other value of meditation and transcendental experience. But the *Gītā* remained for us merely a book of piety, though an inspired one, and we did not tap it to develop human excellence in society. But that is precisely what we in India should have been engaged in in a big way, at least ever since we entered the modern age and saw this spirit of man struggling and overcoming obstacles in Western culture. It is this philosophy of manliness, of strength, not exclusively of closing the eyes, but of opening them, of recognizing the other human beings, of developing social virtues and civic graces, and working in a team-spirit, that we should have assimilated, so as to create cultural and social excellence in our nation.

10. *The Spark of Prometheus and Bhagīratha*

This is the philosophy and message of the modern Western thought; that message is as ancient as Greeko-Roman thought. There is one symbol of that excellence in Western culture, namely, the spirit of Prometheus of ancient Greek culture. If every child is helped to ignite its *Promethean* spark, you will see a new India rising again.

Prometheus is a remarkable symbol of manliness becoming the sheet-anchor of human thought and action. We have a *promethean* symbol in India, namely, Bhagīratha, to whom every obstacle was a challenge. He had to overcome a series of obstacles for the good he wanted to do—to bring Gaṅgā water to nourish the people of his country, to bring Gaṅgā from heaven to earth so that our nation could flourish. It was only after heroic struggles lasting years and years that he had the satisfaction of seeing the Gaṅgā flowing down from the Himalayas through the plains of Hindustan. Since then that river has been the river of plenty and prosperity to the people of India, the river of holiness and the river of dedication; and the man who brought her to earth has become the symbol of all that is manly and noble, in our cultural history.

When will our children catch in themselves that *bhagīratha* spark, that *promethean* spark, by which alone we can put them on the new road of human excellence where a deep human concern forms the motivation? Life's primary motivation cannot be selfishness, be it worldly, be it other-worldly. Even salvation is a selfish pursuit. When millions are in distress, how can I enjoy a pleasure, even of salvation, for myself? That is the new ideal which we have to capture in our outlook and work-a -day philosophy. When Buddha saw a monk in meditation, oblivious of the suffering of another monk in the next room, a brother monk suffering from dysentery, he went and served that monk, and when the first monk came up after his meditation, Buddha said to him: 'Go away; you have not understood my teaching. You should have given up your meditation when you knew that another man was in distress.' Here is a new concern. If even a man like Buddha, whose central message was an exclusive concern with a life of meditation, could express such a profound human concern, how much more should we, social individuals?

If the vast majority of us take it as our philosophy of life and action, this genuine concern for the other individual, then out of that will come true meditation, true transcendental experience also. This is what the *Gītā* taught. The *Gītā* did not make any distinction between the path of work and the path of meditation; says the *Gītā* :

Ekamapyāsthitaḥ samyag ubhayorvindate phalam—

'If you are well established in one (action or meditation), you reap the fruit of both.'

That is the teaching of the *Gītā,* so that here is a path which, if only our people can understand both in its theory and in its technique, can immediately set the nation on the road of adventure in man-making and nation-building, out of which will come every other type of human excellence. There is the root and there are the fruits. Let us not vainly search for the fruits; let us primarily search out the root itself; for out of the root will come all the fruits that there are. That root of all human greatness, as Vivekananda said, is a tremendous confidence in oneself. Infinite powers are lying within us; for we are the Ātman, the pure and divine Self. Faith in this Self is known as *śraddhā, ātma-śraddhā,* without which, Vedānta holds, no man, no nation, can scale the heights of greatness. Education and religion help man to manifest the powers sleeping within him. What is the field of this manifestation? Life itself. It is the *Kurukṣhetra,* the great battlefield, in which we are to manifest these great virtues and graces. Accept life as a challenge and convert it into a battlefield where these great virtues and graces—character, efficiency, compassion, and the spirit of dedication, flourish, all these that go to make a citizen into a noble individual in society.

11. *Freedom and Responsibility*

Today the citizenship concept has to be instilled into our youth in all its wide bearings, and not only in its political bearing, which is what we generally understand by it in India. Boys and girls stand in a queue and they grow up year by year; and when they come to be 21, they become citizens automatically. It may even be 18 soon. That is all we know about citizenship in India. But there are educational principles, practices, and techniques, by which a child is made fit for the citizenship ideal; by which he or she becomes a mature person, with large hearts and broad shoulders, capable of bearing responsibly the burdens of society, whether at 21 or at 18. That concept of human excellence as a citizen who is *a responsible* and *a free* member of *a free community* is not emphasized in our education. The sense of responsibility immediately increases the spiritual stature of man and makes him or her mature in a socio-political sense; and if there is one thing which we have lost in India ever since we attained independence, it is this maturity and its fruit, the sense of responsibility.

Social responsibility has largely been banished from, or rather has not arisen yet, in large segments of our society, among whom are teachers, students, industrialists, administrators, ministers, MLAs, and MPs. Whatever contacts, whatever behaviour, man engages himself in, bear a new look as soon as he endows them with this sense of responsibility. Take away that sense of responsibility and I become, what one may call, a man 'running amuck'; and most people today are 'running amuck' in society, individually or in groups, with plenty of energy to spare, but not knowing what to do with it creatively.

12. *Human Vitality and Its Man-ward Direction*

Fortunately, for the last few years, we have gained one thing which we have not had for centuries together; and this is a sense of tremendous vitality. Our young people today are full of vitality; this was not so even fifty years ago. They were all jaded, timid, with no confidence; we were under the spell of *tamas*. Today there is confidence, there is energy, there is vitality. We have risen to *rajas*. But there is no creative purpose and direction; because that *rajas* is still under the control of *tamas*. Energy without direction is self-cancelling energy. The only direction that human energy should take today is the man-ward direction; this is when *rajas* comes under the control of *sattwa*. The good of man lies in a recognition of man as the main focus of values and of society as the field for the culture of these values. This is the beginning of man's spiritual growth and the steady emergence of the elements of the spectrum of character-excellence. From now on, life comes under the guidance of a lofty philosophy. A shoemaker ceases to be a mere shoe-maker, a mere bread-winner, a mere social functionary, but manifests a new personality-excellence when his life is lit up by this new philosophy. He is touched with the blessing of a new social outlook arising out of a new sense of *personal worth* and *social responsibility*. He is using his energies for the good of society and the manifestation of his own spiritual dimension of personality. He does not any more consider himself a mean individual nor his job a mean job. A sense of personal dignity immediately transforms the whole work-situation.

Similarly, a teacher or an administrator, an industrialist or a legislator, all find new meaning and significance in what they are called upon to do; and when this happens, what a change sets in in the whole aspect of man and his life and his work! It is this philosophy, this vision of human possibilities, that should inspire us today; out of it will come all the shining spectra of human excellence.

13. *The Tyranny of Excess Politics*

India produces one type of people today, included in the type pursuing the three 'p's already mentioned, namely, the politician. Millions of them are coming from every nook and corner. But if history teaches us any lesson, it is that, if a nation has too much politics, it is bound to wither and die. To modify Oliver Goldsmith a little: ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey, where politicians abound but *men* become few. That is what India is getting to be every day. Even little children want to play politics all the time. What a ruinous state! When there is a glut of one commodity in the market, it becomes cheap, too cheap. Too much of politics destroys the quality of politics as much as the moral tone of man; shatters the fabric of human society and tends to kill the patriotic impulse. The development of political consciousness in the people is healthy and necessary. But the sheer pursuit of power and nothing but power and the gains from that power by a section of the people from whom much is expected, is a tragedy. When we speak of defection, of floor-crossing, and all that, they are nothing but the symptoms of a serious disease that is eating into the body-politic, the disease of cynicism which is more harmful than plague or leprosy, the disease of misdirected political energies, the disease of unconcern for the nation. Therein one finds the lowest ebb of social life where human nature expresses only 'I and mine'; no touch of any excellence here at all!

The scope of Sri Ramakrishna's famous dictum: 'Religion is not for empty bellies', needs to be expanded to cover also: 'Politics is not for empty bellies, for under-developed societies'. For them the health-giving motto is: Silent acquisition of knowledge, and intelligent, hard, cooperative application of the same in productive work.

When I was in Karachi before partition, politicians in Karachi were often criticized by the local newspapers for a certain unique trait in them, not much evident elsewhere in India then, namely, a capacity for ever-shifting loyalties. The papers used to compare them to the Indus river which is full of vagaries; it changes its course during every flooding season. Politics in Sind was like the Indus, unpredictable. No ministry outlived more than three or four months. I remember reading a Karachi editor summing up the Sind political situation in two lines of English verse:

> A merciful Providence made us all hollow
> that we our principles might swallow!

How true it is with respect to man today in our own post-independence society! After independence, a merciful providence made many of us hollow, so that we our principles might swallow. If we have principles we can swallow them; suppose there are none? For even the supply of that commodity is becoming scarce. What then will be our fate?

14. *Wanted, a New National Urge*

So I say, a new concept of human excellence must inspire our youths so that, on entering a college or a university, they will learn the need and the technique of seeking excellence in different fields according to their capacity. And how many are the varieties of excellence—intellectual, social, political, artistic and religious—which wait to be developed in India! It is these multi-faced excellences indeed that go to make a nation great.

Excellence is the correct prescription for India today. Develop character-excellence; then your behaviour and work will express that excellence that is within you. Hitch your wagon to some high star; let mothers and fathers inspire their children to do so. But I am sorry to say that most educated mothers and fathers in India, specially among the middle class and the upper middle class, play up only one pursuit before their children: passing examinations, getting degrees, and securing a lucrative job; absolutely nothing else. They seem to forget that there is such a thing as human excellence, that there is something like being intrinsically great as a man. Whether one is getting Rs. 12,000 or Rs. 10,000 or only Rs. 3,000 a year, there is such a thing as an intrinsic excellence in man which is of primary significance; and that excellence cannot be sold or purchased with money. Other things are secondary to this human excellence. If this idea is not inculcated in our youth early, we shall only deepen the tragedy through which we are passing today. A man holds a job, a position; his only value is his position. Take it away from him and he is a zero. Naturally he will struggle hard to stick to that position. He will never allow himself to get out of it, because outside of it he is nothing. Whereas if, in our national education, we help a child to build an intrinsic greatness into himself, when later he occupies a job or a position, *it will be he who will adorn it* and not *vice versa*.

15. *Intrinsic Excellence versus 'Cālāki'*

What a beautiful concept of human excellence that is! This is a new lesson to us in India. I say it is a new lesson, because during the last few centuries, we had taught our children not to strive for greatness in themselves but to shine in the borrowed greatness of a father or a grandfather, of the status of a caste or a social hierarchy. Human excellence as such we failed to stress in our society; nor did we prepare our children to admire and seek this value-sense. The zero has no value by itself; but place it after a digit and it is endowed with value. Similarly, we are zeroes trying to be on the right side of someone or something to assume value. This must change. Every child must be told that he should seek to achieve for himself or herself an integral value and not a mere positional value. He must be taught to develop an intrinsic human excellence. In this way, from childhood onwards a new philosophy, a new vision of human greatness, must be instilled in our children, a new concept of confidence in oneself, a capacity to face and overcome any obstacle on the way to this intrinsic greatness; this again, children must be told, comes only by hard work. If there is one single lesson that our Indian children must be taught again and again, it is this great lesson which Swami Vivekananda expressed in Bengali that no great work can be done, no greatness can be achieved, through *cālāki* or *cleverness,* but only through hard work:

Cālāki dwāra koṇo mahat kārya hoy na—

'Through *cālaki* no great work, no true greatness, can be accomplished.'

One has to pay the price for it. Students want to pass examinations by *cālāki,* by any *cālāki* possible; people want to make money by *cālāki,* to get jobs or arrange jobs and promotions by *cālāki*. Here is a tendency which, if not reversed, can destroy the whole fabric of society. It takes alertness to protect the health and strength of a nation and preserve its freedom and liberty; and therefore, those who are sensitive, those who can catch the finer vibrations, those who feel responsive to the great aspirations of the Indian heart today, must be awake and alert and constantly struggle against this tendency to seek quick results by subterfuge and *cālāki*. Even God today is made to come to us through *cālāki*. There is all the desire in many of us and all the effort by many of us to make religion cheap. God is so great a value that, unless one pays the price, one cannot attain Him; but because one is unwilling to pay the price, one brings God down to one's own level. What we have done to religion therefore is to bring it down to our level, by cheapening it as much as possible. People, more so our educated section, seek cheap religion.

This cheapening of religion and the cheapening of every other kind of human excellence is writ large in the last two centuries of our history; and recently there has been much more of it. In three months one can realize God, says a pedlar of religion; and thousands of the educated run after him. All this cheap stuff comes to us, or we go to it in thousands. We do not know what religion is. We think it is something we can purchase in the market. We forget what the great Upaniṣads tell us that it is like 'walking on the edge of a razor'. How hard is the road to spiritual greatness, nay, to any greatness! None but a heroic soul can ever succeed here.

True 'cleverness', *cāturi* or *cālāki,* is to realize God present in the heart of all, says God to man in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (XI. XXIX. 22):

Eṣā buddhimatāṁ buddhiḥ manīṣā ca manīṣiṇām;
Yat satyam anṛteneha martyenāpnoti mā amṛtam—

'This is the intelligence of the intelligent and the wisdom of the wise, namely, to realize, in this very life, Me, the true and the immortal, with the help of the ephemeral and the mortal (*i.e.* the body).'

Now this concept of the heroic mould, of heroic struggle and endeavour and achievement, must be instilled in our children. To children we have to say: Whatever be your field of life, at whatever level of life you live, be *a man* by striving to bring out the infinite possibilities lying within you, and we wish you godspeed. A short line in the *Mahābhārata,* conveying the exhortation of a mother to her son about a high concept of human excellence, comes to my mind. It is thrilling to realize that so much philosophy and inspiration can be compressed in so few words, as in that line(***Udyoga-parva,*** 131.13):

Muhūrtaṁ jvalitaṁ śreyo, na tu dhūmāyitaṁ ciram—

'It is better to flame forth for an instant than to smoke away for ages!'

16. *Man versus Money*

Let our children today get this inspiration from their parents that was given by one of our mothers to her son over four thousand years ago. For instance, Śaṅkarācārya lived only 32 years, but what excellent years! He lived for a purpose and left the stamp of his personality on the mind and face of India. Vivekananda lived only for 39 years and what an intense life it was! Some of the greatest men were they who lived short but intense lives. Let children get these great examples before them when they are young.

There is a beautiful episode about Vivekananda when he was the little boy Naren, which I wish to mention in this connection, because it is central to the subject of pursuit of excellence and this great theme: encouraging human excellence. His father was an attorney in the Calcutta High Court earning plenty of money which he used to spend freely. He spent more than he earned; he was so very generous. Naren's mother was anxious; father was saving nothing for their children who were growing up; what security did they have for their future? So one day she called young Naren and told him:Go to your father and ask him what he is going to leave behind for you. The boy was bold and he straightaway went up to his father and asked: Father, what are you going to leave for me? Forthwith the father answered, and I wish every father answers like this to the queries of his children today: Go and look into the mirror and then you will know what I am leaving for you. The boy looked into the mirror and immediately understood what his father meant. A bright face, shining eyes, full of self-confidence, a picture of manliness and strength, that was the boy. What more does one want? With these, you can achieve anything in this world. Without these, but with only a fat bank account left by the parents, you can achieve nothing. That is basic human excellence.

We give money to our children; we set up bank accounts for them; we often indulge in all sorts of malpractices so that we may leave something to our children; but by these measures we only ruin our children and sap the manhood and womanhood of our nation. Money is meant to be spent; it is good as a servant but bad as a master; let it circulate; let it bring happiness everywhere, of which only one part is our children. But to the children we should say: we will give you education; we will give you manliness; we will give you strength and courage; we will give you training in swimming, then we shall leave you on the sea of life. Sink or swim, it depends on you.

17. *Need to Overcome the Drag of Our Feudal Legacy*

This kind of training will bring the best out of our children; it will help to manifest in them real human excellence. The pampering of children by the Indian parents, and their blind attachment to them to the exclusion of other children, has been long with us as a feudal trait and legacy, and many of the character-deficiencies of our people have been the products of this pampering, this blind biological attachment, which cannot bring out the heroic fibre out of them. Love can do it; but attachment cannot. But love cannot end up with one's own biological offspring. There are some who try to secure more marks for their children in examinations, for which they bribe the teacher; some bribe the educational authority to get a promotion for their children; their children thus get things done for them at the cost of others, and by hook or crook. Why don't they ask their children to stand on their own feet? Why cannot parents say to them in the words of Swami Vivekananda: Stand on your own feet and be men.

But no, many of our parents cannot say that; their feudal upbringing and outlook make them want their children to depend upon them all the time; they feel a *māyā* about it. Sri Ramakrishna says that *māyā* is bondage and *dayā* is liberation. *Māyā* is I and mine and *dayā* means you *and* I. Until we are able to get beyond this *māyā* and get into this *dayā* mood, until we get freed from the thraldom to the organic and the biological and rise to the level of the spiritual, we cannot rise to the level of citizenship of a free nation. This *māyā,* this worldliness, has been too much with us and we have long consoled ourselves by saying that we are, after all, worldly people, not saints.

We clean forgot that 'living in the world' is not, need not be, the same as 'being worldly'. As Sri Ramakrishna says: Live in the world; but allow not worldliness to get into you. That makes for stagnation. He adds: a boat will be *on* the water; that is the proper place for the boat. But water should not be *in* the boat; that will make the boat unfit for the purpose for which it is meant.

18. *The Anatomy of Nepotism*

Our administration in every department and at every level is ridden with what they call nepotism. Many of us cannot be objective in judging between two candidates, one of whom is more talented than the other; for if the other is slightly related to the person concerned, his judgement is automatically swayed in his favour; and the more talented goes to the wall. This is obviously wrong, for it is the negation of justice and fair play; and an accumulation of such negations destroys the fabric of society. This type of bias is the product of blind attachments arising from one's biological limitations which confines one's outlook and sympathies to one's biological kinships, caste kinships, etc. All these limitations of outlook and sympathy have militated against our nation building stable political structures and progressive social institutions for centuries. Today we need citizens who can look at national problems from broad perspectives; a citizen is not the mere father or mother of a small household; his sympathies and interests are nationwide. Historically we have been good as *gṛhasthas,* householders. Within the limited family circle, we have a fine record of mutual love and service. But that is not enough today. *The gṛhastha must grow into* *the citizen*. And that is essentially a *spiritual growth*. This will result in the blossoming of a new type of dynamic human excellence in our country, making for all-round progress.

19. *Need for Spiritual Growth*

This is necessarily a slow process; for it means unlearning many old ways and habits and learning many new ones. It is a very difficult process, especially for an old society such as ours. But let us not become entirely averse to start to learn some new things and forget some old things. If a society does not learn new values in response to new situations, it writes its own epitaph. The later French Bourbons, as historians tell us, 'never learnt anything new and never forgot anything old'; that was how the French Revolution of 1789 came about. Let it not be said of our people also later that we learnt nothing new and forgot nothing old. There are many things to forget, many things to completely forsake, and there are wonderful things to learn, of which the central core is a social concern, a response to the other individual, a real concern for the other man, which is the essence of ethics and the spring of character and all other excellences. *That is the basic nourishment the Indian soul needs today*. The higher reaches of religion like *samādhi* etc. will remain far far away until we lay this foundation, until we ascend these first stages of spiritual growth, character-efficiency, and ethical awareness. Saintliness is very difficult to attain. But we strove for that. So fake saints we have plenty in India; real saints are always few. But it would have been wiser for us if we had first laid the foundation of saintliness in manliness. *Saintliness is to be built on manliness*. Be men first; then try to be saints, was the constant exhortation of Vivekananda to us. Be citizens first; then try to develop into saints. Have concern for the other person; this is where a new character excellence will come to all of us; and we need it very badly. If the problems are there, the remedies are there too; put the chemicals together; crystallization will take place according to God's laws, says Swami Vivekananda.

20. *Opinions versus Convictions*

We are not in search of any new ideology or ideas; they are all there at hand, close at hand; but clear thinking and a measure of will power to express ideas in life and action—this is all what we need. A measure of courage of conviction must come to our people. We have bundles of *opinions,* we have very few *convictions;* it is convictions in the heart, not opinions in the head, that make for character, that make for real human excellence, that make for the impact of man on his environment.

These transformations must come over India; and they must begin to come over this generation, so that it can pass them on to the emerging younger generation. An increasing number of our people must become aware of our national background, social and historical, of the great opportunities available today to wipe out the centuries-old stains on our society and create a new society, humane and progressive. What immense human energy resources and what revolutionary social transformations can we not expect then in India, if only we become aware of this and start moving in that direction! Let it take time, *but we must make sure that the caravan has started moving in the right direction.* In every city, in every village, sensitive people who love the nation must get together and think together and project this concept of human excellence everywhere so that the nation can be put on the road to all-round growth. We need industrial growth, economic growth, and many other types of growth. But they are not the last word. *They are subordinate to one single growth, namely, the growth of the human spirit, the increase of quality in human life.* What is this quality in human life? We ask this question again and again. Quality is the criterion of evolution at the human stage, says Sir Julian Huxley, the great biologist. We shall today ask this question in India—are we evolving, are we progressing? If so, the quality of human life must get enriched; and that quality is the sign of an enhanced awareness, a developed human concern, and a capacity for dedication and service.

21. *The Quest of Excellence: The Pole Star of One's Life*

The highest concepts of religion will be fulfilled when we fulfil this primary demand. That is why, as I said in the beginning, this pursuit of human excellence is the most pervasive education that the nation should get today. Instead of that, we have adopted the shallow policy of turning out every year so many engineers, so many doctors, so many lawyers, and so many such other *social* *functionaries* from the mill of our educational system, and that too, an inefficient system, since independence. A free nation that hopes to protect and enhance its freedom does not produce *mere social functionaries* but *citizens trained to perform diverse social functions*. The functions of such alone are creative. Wherever we be, in whatever nook and corner, one query must come from the very atmosphere of our nation to all our children, to all our men and women—are you a citizen performing creative social functions, a man pursuing excellence in your life and action? Is the work that you do, the thought that you think, your social relationships, the very life that you live—are they imbued with the touch of excellence? Are you striving for it? It is the thought of doing better and still better, and keeping in mind the welfare of society in the context of which one develops one's own life, that must always be one's Pole-star.

This interaction of man in society, this inter-nourishment, as the *Gītā* puts it in its third chapter: *parasparaṁ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha,* will alone help to raise the whole tone of the life of man in society. Let us just introduce this notion, this concept, this value, into the heart of India today through all available media—through schools and colleges, through meetings and assemblies, through radio and television, through newspapers and journals—and we have done our work, because, as I quoted Vivekananda earlier, when we put the chemicals together, crystallization will take place according to nature's laws. Let healthy ideas and values be radiated all round; the rest can be left to the inherent goodness and educability of man, to the divinity ever present in the human heart.

22. *Conclusion: Synthesis of Science and Spirituality*

All over the world, there is a ferment and questioning today. Modern science and technology and their offshoot of industrial revolution have made nations in the West, as also Japan in the East, achieve a high measure of material advancement which other nations also are striving to achieve through similar means. Since the post-war years, the nations of the world have become divided accordingly into the two broad categories of the developed or the advanced and the underdeveloped or the backward. And there is much healthy international cooperation in bringing up the standard of living of the under-developed nations. The standard to measure that development is entirely material and economic. The usual criterion of such development is *the per capita production and consumption of electricity*. By this criterion, the United States of America is the most advanced, followed by U.S.S.R., West Germany, Japan, and so on. India's place may be tenth or twelfth in the line.

But this criterion of development is being questioned today; and such questioning is most evident in the advanced nations themselves; it is the result of a dispassionate consideration by their thinkers of the realities of the total social situation in their countries. The contemporary tragedy of material affluence coexisting with general human unfulfilment, resulting in crime, sex, and drug explosions and increase of suicide rates in these countries, compel a reconsideration, in the light of a more comprehensive understanding of human nature and human fulfilment, of the very concept of 'national development' or 'national advancement' and its erstwhile economic criterion. That criterion is found to be *necessary* but *not sufficient*. It is increasingly being realized that the nations categorized as 'under-developed' by that criterion are 'developed' by some other criterion and that this other criterion is often more significant in assessing total human fulfilment.

This second criterion of 'national advancement' or 'development' is, as expressed by the philosophy of Vedānta, *the per capita production and consumption of spiritual energy*. This is an energy resource as palpable as electric or other forms of physical energy and its source is the divine depths of the human personality itself and not in external nature like other energy resources. The science and technique of the production and utilization of this unique energy is religion, as understood in Vedānta. This is the energy that can digest all other energy resources and their products and thus restore man to his dignity, health. and all-round well-being. India will do well to keep her historically acquired hold on the science and technical know-how of this spiritual energy resource, while trying to catch up with that erstwhile material criterion of development. *This synthesis of physical science and the science of spirituality will alone ensure perfect all-round human excellence.*

20

THE VALUE OF SANSKRIT*

1. *Introduction*

According to twentieth-century biology, culture is cumulative experience, experience stored and transmitted from generation to generation; and language is the instrument, the tool which a culture fashions for the communication of thought and experience. The deeper the range of thought and experience to be communicated, the richer becomes the tool of its communication.

2. *The Place of Sanskrit Among World Languages*

As a tool of cultural communication, Sanskrit holds a unique place among the languages of the world. Firstly, it is the only language which has come down to us from pre-historic times with an uninterrupted history. Secondly, it is the only language which has mothered and nourished a large family of languages both national and international. Thirdly, it is the only language which developed a scientifically phonetic alphabet and initiated the science of philology very early in its career. And fourthly, *it specialized in being the nursery and communication medium of an immense field of experience and knowledge, namely, that of the inner world, the world of Reality that lies above the sensate level of experience,* giving birth to the science of *adhyātma-vidyā,* the science of man in depth, as developed by the Upaniṣads and re-verified by an unbroken tradition of experimenters down to our own time

3. *Its Unique Contribution to Human Life*

Sanskrit today is not a spoken language; it is not the language medium of the positive sciences, nor of politics and economics, war and statecraft. It has so little to do with the day-to-day life of man; it has little to contribute to him in his field of 'making a living'. This is the mission of English and other world languages so far, and for which, we are also progressively developing all our other national

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*Contributed to the *Souvenir,* 1970, of the Oriental High School and Sanskrit College of the Madras Sanskrit Academy languages. But to consider Sanskrit irrelevant because of this factor will, however, be a great folly. Making a living, with respect to so high a being in the scale of evolution as man, is an aim necessary *but not sufficient*. It is essentially a *quantitative* concept. There is a vast field left over after he has made a living, the cultivation of which is essential to impart *qualitative* enrichment to his life. *In this vital field of the spiritual enrichment of human life and to the leading him on to a sense of true fulfilment, Sanskrit offers an educational opportunity to all modern humanity which few languages of the world are equipped or historically conditioned to contribute.* And this great world language has been developed and shaped as a tool for this very purpose by the Indian people *as a whole*, unlike our other national languages which have been developed and shaped by particular segments of our national populations and particular regions of our vast country.

4. *Its Place in Future India*

Sanskrit is not a window to the world of matter; but it is, and will ever remain, a window to the soul of man and to the soul of nature. When the centuries-long economic pressures have been lifted from the life of our people by a few decades of scientific, industrial, and socio-political techniques of the modern age, man in the Indian context will begin to experience, in a pervasive way, the hunger and thirst of the spiritually-seeking heart, the craving of the mature mind and soul, and will then long for the spiritual food and drink to which he has been historically conditioned. *He will then rediscover the rich feast of spirituality which his culture has left for him and also rediscover, in the process, his great Sanskrit language as the unique doorway to that spiritual nourishment.*

5. *Conclusion*

Sanskrit will not die so long as man in India experiences the hunger of the spiritual heart. Sanskrit is the window to all that is fascinating, elevating, and enriching in human experience. It is the sacred body of *vāk-devī*, goddess of speech, which ever points out to man the Truth that lies above all speech and thought, above all space and time.

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THE PURSUIT OF HUMAN EXCELLENCE*

1. *Introduction*

We indulge in so many kinds of pursuits in India today, of which the most important, and, to many people, the only one, is *the pursuit of money-making.* The pursuit of money, the pursuit of pleasure, and the pursuit of power—these three pursuits have frozen our hearts all these thirty-one years of our post-independence existence, and have almost destroyed the creative spirit of our people and taken the nation to the brink of despair. This evil tendency can be reversed only by a new pursuit, which will help to purify all other pursuits and destroy whatever is evil in them; and that new pursuit is *the pursuit of human excellence.*

2. *The Ethical Education of Our Children*

A new India is coming up in our children of the present generation. They are unlike the children of the earlier generations; they have more of what our Vedanta calls the energy of *rajoguṇa* in place of the inertia of *tamoguṇa.* They are more intelligent, more vivacious, more alert, more fearless, and more straight-forward; these are sterling character assets, and represent the early stages of man's spiritual growth, according to Swami Vivekananda. But they are deficient in social sense, in social responsibility, and in the concern for other individuals and groups; they also exhibit more than the healthy level of crudeness, intolerance, and aggressiveness, revealing the divorce of the energy of culture from the energy of education. The result is that they have become a problem to themselves and a problem to the nation. These traits reveal a character in *which, as our Vedanta* puts it, *rajas* is till under the control of *tamas;* they need to go one step further in their spiritual growth by which their *rajas* will be brought under the control of *saṭtva* and their *tamas* under the control of *rajas.* Our older generation, with their largely

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*Special contribution to the *Times of India Illustrated Weekly* of 1 October 1978 published under the title : *The Shaping of Our Future* feudal mental make-up, can hardly become fit exemplars for our younger generation. From the lure of a dead past, therefore, our youths have to be summoned to face the hardships and challenges of the living present and shoulder the responsible and creative roles of ushering in the delights of a glorious future. Their energies, now functioning destructively like indisciplined elemental forces such as we experience in floods and earthquakes, need to be made creative and responsible, by self-discipline through a socially-oriented will.

Our scientific technology is engaged in disciplining these elemental forces of nature to enhance human happiness and welfare. We need a similar spiritual technology to discipline the energies of our youths to enhance their own and the nation's welfare. *This is the ethical education of our children, by which they are made to feel the weight of social responsibility for the rebuilding of their national body-politic, by which they learn to give a creative and constructive direction to their enormous energies now expressing largely in destructive and self-cancelling ways, and by which they not only cease to be the despair, but become the shining hope, of the nation.*

3. *Tyaga and Seva*

Human excellence was the constant theme of Swami Vivekananda. He will welcome this spirit of *rajas* in our younger generation today, but will also whisper the energy of his Vedantic message into every one of them to raise his or her energies to the higher level of *sattva* through self-discipline and cultivation of ethical and social awareness. That energy then will find expression in a socially oriented will and purpose and dedication, with its constant and spontaneous mood and temper of *tyāga* and *seva*— renunciation and service.

This *tyaga* and *seva* is the first fruit of all true education and all true religion, from which it issues spontaneously and naturally, without the feeling of being forced to sacrifice and without expecting special external inducements to prop it up. Herein we see palpably the spiritual growth of man and the dynamic march of human evolution, beyond the organic level to the psycho-social level, as envisaged in twentieth-century biology. Where this dynamic evolutionary movement is absent, human life gets stuck up in worldliness and becomes stagnant. Such stagnation is spiritual death, says Vedānta; and it is more to be feared than physical death, by a species so high in the scale of evolution as man. Sri Ramakrishna exhorts man to avoid this pitfall of spiritual death; says he:

'Live in *saṁsāra,* or the world; but allow not *saṁsāra,* or worldliness, to get into you; that will make you stagnant. A boat will be on the water; that is its natural place; but water should not be allowed to get into the boat; that will render it stagnant and unfit for the purpose for which it is meant.'

4. *The Gṛhastha Spiritually Growing into the Citizen*

In this illustrative teaching, Sri Ramakrishna has compressed the entire message of social ethics and practical religion. It envisages the *gṛhastha,* or the householder, *evolving into the citizen;* it exhorts the biologically and physically conditioned man or woman to grow into the freedom and expansiveness of the spirituality of citizenship, which manifests itself as renunciation and service, *tyāga* and *seva.* This is the type of men and women that we have to turn out in increasing numbers in our society today. When we do so, we lay the foundations of the new democratic edifice of our nation on rock. But, today, it has only sand for its base; and it is certain that, as remarked by Jesus in his parable (Matthew. 7, 24-27), a building built on sand cannot stand.

5. *National Development: Economic versus Human*

Today we have to ask this very question: On what base are we to build up the structure of our Indian national life? That structure is already rising here, there, everywhere, through our mighty developmental programmes in the fields of educational expansions, scientific research, industrial and agricultural development, defence, and social welfare. By the end of this century, we shall have solved many of our economic and social problems, the problems relating to the external environment in which human life is set. But one problem will remain, and will become more intractable as we advance in the solution of our environmental problems. It relates to the great question as to what is the type of man that will come out of all this development? Is he or she going to be a clever crooky person, whose increased knowledge tends to the exploitation of other people? A worldly individual, whose centre of interest is always in his or her little self inside, whose centre of gravity is always in the profits and pleasures outside of himself or herself, and who has become stagnant in the world of sensate satisfactions? Or is he or she to be a dynamic person continuing his or her evolution in the psycho-social levels, who is, accordingly, sensitive to higher values and strives to realize them, and who has achieved, or is striving to achieve, the three-fold integrations referred to by the late Bertrand Russell, namely, integration between the self and society, between the self and nature outside, and between the diverse forces within the self itself?

This central problem of society, namely, *the problem of human excellence,* must be tackled from now onwards—the type of men and women that we want to see in the India that is emerging. If that India is to continue her glorious past into a still more glorious future, she will have to achieve a synthesis of the tested and enduring elements of her own tradition with the finest elements of the modern Western tradition. *This meeting of East and West was achieved in a big way in Swami Vivekananda.* Referring to Vivekananda in his *Life of Vivekananda* as 'the embodied unity of a nation containing a hundred different nations (p. 314), Romain Rolland says (*ibid.* p. 310):

> 'In the two words equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action from the most spiritual to the most practical. ... He was the personification of the harmony of all human Energy.'

6. *The Meeting of East and West in Every Citizen*

Every Indian citizen today must achieve this synthesis in a measure in himself or herself. Vivekananda exhorts every Indian to strive in this direction *(The Complete Works,* Vol. V, Eighth Edition, pp. 29-30):

> 'Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious

culture and instincts? This is to be done and we will do it. *You are all born to do it.* Have faith in yourselves; *great convictions are the mothers of great deeds.* Onwards for ever—sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death; this is our motto.'

This is the type of glory and greatness that should descend upon men and women in India, in general, and upon politicians and the members of the administrative services of the Centre and the States, in particular. It will make for the liberation of the spirit of service as a pervasive principle, lighting up the prevailing dark and dismal horizon of our nation and raising the spiritual quality of the life of its citizens. To go here and there to be spiritual is like going here and there to breathe. It is all *here and now*. We have to realize that spirituality is not miracle-mongering, or magic, or cheap mysticism; it is not to be sought merely in caves and forests, but that it is the birth-right of one and all, and is to be cultivated in the fields of one's life and work, in the midst of its ups and downs.

7. *'Better to Flame Forth for an Instant than to Smoke Away for Ages!'*

Our people need to be inspired by this practical, ennobling, and realizable ideal which Vivekananda has put before us in the modern age. He exhorts us that it is far better to live for an ideal for an instant than to lead the life of jelly-fish existence. In the following passage from the *Mahābhārata,* uttered by queen Vidula for the benefit of her son, king Sañjaya, we find this heroic message for all our youths today (*Udyogaparva,* 131, 13):

Muhūrtam jvalitaṁ śreyo
na tu dhūmāyitaṁ ciram—

'It is better to flame forth for an instant than to smoke away for ages!'

Some of the great men of India, like Śaṅkara and Vivekananda, lived *short but intense lives.* Theirs was an intense dedication to God and man, to God in man; and it changed the course of human history. It is better to live intensely for an ideal and vision than to vegetate for long years in a humdrum existence. This is a powerful sentiment that can drive away the clouds of cynicism and frustration from the sky of India. Every educated citizen has to teach himself or herself that he or she not only is *in* India but is also *of* India and *for* India, and is responsible for the nation's well-being. We have to inspire ourselves with the conviction that we have been called upon to be an instrument of our nation's purposes. What can be a greater glory for man in India today than this, that he or she is living in the most creative period of his or her nation's long history, and that he or she is privileged to contribute to it, big or small. When cynicism and frustration lay their cold hand of death on a person, he or she is unable to respond to any higher value, and becomes suspicious of all values, except one's own self-interest.

8. *Conclusion*

We have a long and impressive history and a very rich cultural tradition; and our great thinkers have plunged into life, and into the heart of experience, and given us visions of human excellence which can inspire any culture or civilization. But, for centuries together, we failed to live up to these visions and became stagnant; and from that stagnation, we were rescued by our contact with the modern Western culture. As a result, for over a hundred years now, our society has been passing through the tremendous experience of an awakening, a pervasive renaissance, in the course of which we have been reassessing our own inherited values and comparing them with the values which we have received from the West. A small minority of great minds in India such as Mahatma Gandhi have been able to get a grip on our great national tradition and assimilate into it the tested elements of the Western tradition; and they stand as the great path-finders for the rest of the Indian society, including the large number of those who have got stuck up in the weak and harmful and stagnant elements of their own national tradition, and of those others who have become blinded by the cheap and equally harmful and stagnant elements of the modern Western tradition; for, this minority has synthesized, in themselves, the finest excellences of character of both the East and the West, and demonstrated to our nation that this modern transition in India can be made purposive and fruitful, if the Indian child is given the guidance to understand the dynamic nature of the modern transition in India and to assimilate these two elements in his or her character.

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YOUTH AND THE CONTEMPORARY PERMISSIVE SOCIETY*

1. *Introduction*

Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a big invasion of a philosophy of permissiveness throughout the developed world; but, during the last ten years, there has begun a reaction against this trend. This philosophy is destroying the soul of the people concerned, destroying also their happiness and peace. At some stage, the soul of man reacts against this soul-killing philosophy, and such a reaction is evident in almost all the developed countries—U.S.A., Holland, Australia, and some others.

In the absence of ethical and spiritual discipline, man becomes spiritually weakened; all sorts of evils enter into him, and through him, his society, by which the society decays and finally dies. This phenomenon of permissiveness preceding decay and death of a society or a civilization, which is afflicting modern Western civilization, is not something new in history. I don't know whether you, students of this school, have read about the history of the Roman Empire and civilization, a mighty institution from about the sixth century before Christ to about fifth century after Christ. Towards the last few centuries of its existence, Roman society was strongly invaded by this philosophy of permissiveness. Sex, violence, drunkenness, and similar evils crept into that society in its later phases, and it decayed and died, about which Edward Gibbon has told vividly in his famous book: *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

2. *The Evil Effects of a Permissive Society on Children*

We are now seeing such a process afflicting modern Western civilization. During such a decline, and the evils that emerge from

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*Edited version of the summary of a speech delivered at the Sri Vivekananda High School, Ramakrishna Mission, Nadi, Fiji Republic, South Pacific, on 26 May 1970, and published in the School's *1978 Annual* it, it is the children that are adversely affected most. Children need loving parents at home. How can you children grow and unfold your possibilities without the love of a father and a mother and a peaceful home? But permissive societies and peaceful homes cannot co-exist. We must choose either the one or the other. In a permissive environment, children suffer psychic and personality privations and distortions, and the same children grow up and continue to deepen that malady of permissiveness, until the society becomes sick, and it decays and dies.

Children of today must wake up to these realities of their contemporary society, and foster the idea of the home as a sacred place, and prevent this virus of permissiveness invading its sacred precincts. The love of the father and the mother is needed for the children's mental, emotional, and spiritual development. Parents must love each other, and thus create an environment of love at home, in which to rear their children. Today, more and more people are afflicted with the craze for organic cravings and satisfactions, unchecked and undisciplined; they seek only pleasure, more pleasure, and still more pleasure. That militates against their developing that pure human love with which to envelop their children. And they find it more and more difficult to hold the family together. Tender human love is the cement to hold father, mother, and children together; when that is eroded, the home breaks up, leaving the children high and dry, and one or both of the parents also high and dry and unfulfilled. Thus, sheer pursuit of unchecked individual pleasure uninspired by any standard of ethical and moral values, lowers the quality of human life and human tastes, step by step, and brings about the ruin of a family, the ruin of a society, the ruin of a whole civilization. That is why Indian thought has prescribed *dharma* for the discipline and regulation, by man, of his search for *kāma,* sensate satisfactions, and *artha,* wealth, which is the aid for those satisfactions.

3. *Education Must Impart Character-energy to the Youth*

The education that you get in this school should give you not only the ability to read, write and speak English, do your lessons in science and other subjects, but also the ability to mould a beautiful character. What does 'character' mean? Young people need to develop physically. That is the basis for all other developments–mental and spiritual. Physical development means developing a healthy body through exercises, games, and nourishing diet. Then mental health, which means a cheerful attitude along with perfect inner discipline. Nobody can discipline me; I have to discipline myself: my mind, my sensory system, and their energies, and my emotions and their energies. Indeed we have to discipline them, and convert them into creative energy, and employ that disciplined energy in various fields of work. That is how one develops character. A socially oriented will emerges out of that self-discipline. And character is centred in a socially oriented will. Emotions controlled and directed to work is character-efficiency, says Swami Vivekananda. And education must impart this character-energy to man. That is what is lacking today, in young and old alike: character-energy; that is what gives creative energy. Unchecked pursuit of organic satisfactions and organic pleasures destroys creativity. That is how millions of people are ruining themselves today. By not treating this as an integral part of education, people fail to develop a beauty of soul, a beauty of the inner person, the beauty of character. Education, therefore, is not mere literacy or study of subjects, passing an examination or earning a degree.

4. *Modern versus Modernity.*

A permissive society is the sign of a cheap modernity; there is a vast difference between that *cheap modernity* and *being truly modern*. To be modern is to be *scientific* and to be *humanistic*. The modern age is the creation of modern science; and modern science has ushered in modern humanism as well. And science means a critical sincere pursuit of truth, and the application of the knowledge and power so gained to the alleviation of human suffering. This is science as *lucifera,* as *light.* Then there is science as *fructifera,* the *fruits* of science, the technological and industrial fruits of science. Modern becomes modernistic when men run after the *fruits* of science only, ignoring its *roots,* and seek more and more organic satisfactions from its industrial products, and identify science itself with such a shallow life of mere comfort and pleasure. It is this that leads to permissiveness and the decay and death of civilizations. Many great scientists are protesting against this

cheapening of modern science. Therefore, don't think that this permissiveness is sanctioned by science. The *fruits* of science can be enjoyed even by the animals in our Zoo gardens; but to appreciate the *roots* of science, you need a trained mind, trained in love of truth, detachment, precision, and the spirit of inquiry. If you are a scientist, if you have this scientific spirit and temper, then it is truly modern; it is truly wonderful. For that very spirit and temper will take you beyond the bounds of external nature, which is the field of search for all *physical* science, into that strange and mysterious and fascinating world of the internal nature of man himself, into that wonderful *non-physical* field of, what India's ancient philosophy of Vedānta calls, *adhyātma-vidyā,* the science of man in depth, the science of man as the Ātman, infinite and pure and free, the full *science of human possibilities,* to use the phrase coined by the late Sir Julian Huxley. Ask the question: what is the truth about myself? Discover the facts about your inner being; and build your life, and the life of your society, on the shining truths you will discover, with the help of that *adhyātma-vidyā,* from that scientific pursuit. And never be misled by people who understand science as only technology, industry, and their comfort-giving gadgets like radio, t.v, cars, refrigerators, etc. These are small fruits of science. The best part of science is truth-seeking and clear thinking.

5. *Education to Combine Physical Science with the Science of Spirituality*

In the U.S.A. , I saw many young people fascinated by these gadgets, running after them, and taking themselves as scientific; but I also saw there many other young people who are fed up with these gadgets and with this cheapening of science, and turning to that higher science, the science of man in depth, the science that proclaims that man is *amṛtasya putra,* the child of immortality, and not a mere clod of matter. It is this search that brings many of them to India's immortal philosophy, the Vedānta; not only the youths, but also many scientists in the West are attracted to Eastern thought, particularly Indian philosophy and spirituality. The cosmology of the Hindus, of the Buddhists, and of the Taoists is attracting many such scientists; for that cosmology includes both whatever is material and whatever is spiritual in the universe. They are not treated as in water-tight compartments, or as hostile to each other. They are all traced to one infinite reality, which is called *Brahman* in Vedānta, *Dharma-kāya* in Buddhism, and the *Tao* in Taoism of China. This one reality has become the world outside, as well as the body, mind, and spirit in man.

So, physical science is not the only way to understand science; scientific search must take the student to the non-physical levels of experience also; this is the science of spirituality, the source of all ethical and moral values, the source of character-strength, of inner peace, of life-fulfilment. We have to evolve our educational patterns in our educational institutions by combining physical sciences with the science of spirituality, education with character, knowledge with wisdom. This is the unifying vision and message of Vedānta.

6. *Impact of the Vedantic Message of the Innate Divinity of Man*

In this modern age, Swami Vivekananda took this message of Vedānta to America, England, and other Western countries, as, in ancient times, Buddhism had taken this message of India to China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Tibet, and all South-east Asian countries. Vedānta preached by Vivekananda is so rational, universal, and practical that, even in communist cities like Moscow, where I had gone to lecture last October, 1977, in its State University, students, research scholars, and professors wanted me to speak to them on *Swami Vivekananda: His Humanism*. All of them could understand simple English; so I spoke in simple slow-spoken English, without any Russian translation. What a hearty response I found when they heard from me that Swami Vivekananda saw man as a spark of the divine! You are not this tiny organic system; there is something infinite and divine hidden in you; and that must be manifested, must be unfolded, in the course of your education, in the course of your life process.

But how to manifest it, how to unfold it? That is our problem. Vedanta says, there is a science, there is a technique, by which this profound truth hidden within us can be made manifest. When we love other people, when we serve other people, when we sit in meditation, when we are ethical and moral, we are manifesting our divine nature; on the other hand, when we are unethical, immoral, when we run after animal pleasures, without self-discipline and discrimination, when we indulge in crime, we cover our divine nature with the darkness of ignorance or spiritual unawareness, more and more, like ashes covering fire. Swami Vivekananda said in his lecture on *The Mission of the Vedānta (Complete Works,* Vol.III, p.19):

> 'Arise, awake! Awake from this hypnotism of weakness. *None* is really weak: the soul is infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the God within you, do not deny Him. ...
>
> 'Teach yourselves, teach every one, his real nature: call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come, when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.'

When I said these things during my lecture at the Moscow State University, a professor got up, during the question-answer session, and asked: 'Is there such a divine focus in man? It is a wonderful idea; I would like to know more about it.'

I took about ten minutes to deal with this important question. I said:

Your Marxist society in U.S.S.R. is trying to establish peace and harmony; when such a society is established, there will be no need for the political state: it will eventually wither away; every one will behave morally in such a society, without the coercion of the state. But, I added, after fifty years, you do not see the state withering away; there is more and more of state control, more laws, more police control; there is more crime, more drunkenness. That is what is happening in U.S.S.R., as in many Western societies. It was recently reported in some newspapers that the U.S.S.R. authorities were very much worried over these developments. It is time to realise, I said, that this is what will happen, what can be expected to happen, when you try to manage people only through the *external* means of rules, regulations, police, military. There is need to initiate a new discipline in people, *from within themselves,* to rouse their inherent divine nature, to rouse their *Śiva* consciousness, and thus to make them grow spiritually, so that ethical and moral actions and behaviour may become natural and spontaneous, as a by-product of such spiritual growth; and that external control and regulation should be only a help, in the early stages, to this internal discipline and spiritual growth. A new energy must be generated within man himself, the energy of spirituality, to control and guide the lower impulses of man.

I was impressed with the wonderful response from the audience to this exposition of the central truth of Vedanta.

7. *Conclusion*

I mention this episode only to show you how, everywhere, many people are fed up with the current cheap and low and empty life of violence, drugs, sex, and general tension and unhappiness. There must be some change, sooner or later, sooner, the better. Let us start this change with our fine children first. Let our children think about these problems and how to solve them. Let them be helped by teachers and parents to discuss these contemporary social maladies and to search for their remedies in the rich and luminous spiritual and philosophical heritage of humanity. Let their education be oriented to the creation of a home environment, filled with the warmth of love and affection and creative and healthy joys and pleasures, in place of broken homes and sick societies. This orientation of our education is essential and urgent. Our developing societies like Fiji and India cannot afford the luxury of a permissive philosophy and atmosphere in our societies, which will destroy the body and soul of our peoples. You are all young vital children, full of energy, full of hope. And hope means *the joyous beckoning of the future.* Let that future beckon you and help you to mould the present under its inspiration. My love and best wishes to you all.

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SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SAMUDRA-MANTHAN MYTH*

1. *Introduction*

The ancient story of *Samudra-manthan* of the Hindu tradition has got a deep spiritual meaning for all humanity, especially in this modern age. During the past four hundred years, man has been doing, what the myth refers to as, *samudra-manthan,* 'churning the ocean', through his scientific discoveries, technological inventions, industrial developments, and socio-economic programmes. Man 'churns' the 'ocean' of his life and experience, churns the whole of nature, to obtain the 'nectar' of a happy, joyous, and fulfilled life—a churning that has become intensified in the modern period.

2. *The Ancient Myth and the Modern Reality*

The vigorous churning of the ocean by the gods and the demons produced both poison and nectar, along with many other good and useful and attractive things in between, says the myth. The modern churning also, similarly, has produced beneficent and harmful things in abundance. When the beneficent things emerge, men rush towards them to possess them and to enjoy them. When harmful things emerge, all run away in fear and consternation. The gods and demons in the myth also behaved similarly. Among the beneficent and attractive things that came out, according to the myth, are *Lakṣmi,* the goddess of wealth and welfare, and *Dhanvantari,* the god of health and longevity, bringing with him the pot of nectar capable of conferring immortality on the churning participants. That led to competition, strife, and bitter war between the two groups, in the struggle to obtain the nectar for oneself and deprive the other group of it. The harmful thing that came out was the terrible poison called *halahala* or *kalakuṭa.* Every one was frightened at its emergence; all fled from it, and there was panic all round.

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*Edited version of a parlour talk given in Hyderabad in 1978 and published in *Manthan,* New Delhi, June 1978

This situation, depicted in the myth, is the situation created by modern man in real life in the modern world. Modern science, technology, industry, medicine, economics, politics, and the arts—all these have churned out for modern man many beautiful, good, and useful products which have enhanced the joys of his life. But the churning has produced poisons also—drug and sex and crime explosions, nervous and psychic tensions and breakdowns, and, above all, hydrogen bomb and the prospect of a nuclear war of final doom of all civilization.

The fear, consternation, and panic depicted in the myth, at the emergence of the *hālāhala* poison, is found depicted in real life today. And the remedy for the same, depicted in the myth, has great significance and relevance for contemporary man and for his maladies as well. All these point out to the meeting ground of the ancient myth and the modern reality.

3. *Resort to Śiva, the Great Yogī*

The myth says that, unable to face, much less overcome, the *hālāhala* poison themselves, the gods and demons, accompanied by Brahmā the Creator, approached Śiva to seek his help. Siva is ever immersed in the consciousness of his infinite divine Self, which is the One Self in all. He is also, accordingly, endowed with compassion for all beings. These two qualities have made Him the God of Yoga and of all yogis, ever sought after by them. These qualities of Śiva became manifest, in real life, in later Indian history, in the great Buddha, the enlightened and the compassionate one. And, in later Indian and South-east Asian history and culture, there naturally occurred a natural fusion of Śiva and Buddha and Śaivism and Buddhism.

4. *Śiva Drinks the Poison and Saves the World*

Śiva's eternal abode, says the myth, is the high peak of Kailāsa in the Himalayas. There He lives, along with His wife Umā or Satī, the Divine Mother of all, immersed in the bliss of His infinite Self. All resorted to Kailāsa and presented their sufferings and problems before Śiva. And Śiva was deeply moved at their distress; and he told His wife Umā (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam,* VIII.7.36-38, as narrated by the sage Śuka):

Tad vīkṣya vyasanaṁ tāsāṁ kṛpayā bhṛśa-pīḍitaḥ;
Sarva-bhūta--suhṛd-devaḥ idamāha satīm priyām—

'Seeing this suffering of the people, there arose compassion in the heart of Śiva, who is the friend of all beings and who experienced the grief of these people in Himself: and He spoke thus to His dear wife Satī:

Aho bata bhavānyetat prajānāṁ paśya vaiśasaṁ;
Kṣīroda-mathanodbhūtāt kālakūṭāt upasthitam—

'Alas! see this, O Bhavānī, the great distress of the people arising from the poison of *hālāhala* emerging from the churning of the ocean.'

Āsāṁ prāṇa-parīpsūnāṁ vidheyam abhayaṁ hi me;
Etāvān hi prabhorartho yat dīna-paripālanam—

'These suffering people want to save their life somehow; and My role is to give them fearlessness and protection; this is the life fulfilment of those who have strength and power, that they protect the grief-stricken.'

And so Śiva took the decision (*ibid.*, verse 40, second half):

Tasmāt idam garaṁ bhuñje, prajānāṁ svastirastu me—

'Therefore I shall drink this poison, by which good may betide my people.'

And Śiva calmly drank that poison. And Śuka, the narrator, comments (*ibid.*, verses 43 and 44):

Tasyāpi darśayāmāsa sva-vīryaṁ jala-kalmaṣaḥ;
yaccakāra gale nīlaṁ tacca sādhor vibhūṣaṇam—

'That poison, the evil product of the waters, showed its energy also on Śiva, by leaving a blue mark on His throat: but that, verily, became a *vibhūṣaṇam,* i.e. adornment, in the case of a *sādhu,* or good man (like Śiva).'

Tapyante loka-tāpena prāyaśaḥ sādhavo janāḥ:
Paramārādhanaṁ tad hi pursuṣasyā-khilātmanaḥ—

'For, the hearts of good people burn at the sufferings of the people at large: and that alone is, verily, the (true) worship of the Supreme Divine Person, Who is the Self of all.'

Compassion, dedication, and service are the ways to worship God, who is not a far-away extra-cosmic deity, according to Vedānta, but the One Self in all beings. And Śiva demonstrated, by his spontaneous service of the suffering people, this truth about the proper mode of worship of the Divine.

So Śiva drank the terrible poison and saved the world. But that powerful poison was an insignificant thing compared to Śiva, the God ever aware of His infinite nature and ever immersed in it. So the poison could not do the least harm to Him, except to leave a blue mark on His throat; and from that day, Śiva got a new name, *Nīla-kaṇṭha,* the blue-throated. Such a mark, instead of becoming, as in the case of all ordinary people, a *vidūṣaṇa,* a mark of blemish or ugliness, became a mark of *vibhūṣaṇa,* adornment or beauty, in the case of one like Śiva, says the verse. It added, to His already existing adorable qualities and names, another adorable quality and name.

5. *Śiva of the Myth and Modern Man*

That is the story of the *samudra-manthan* myth and Śiva's role in it. But what is that to you and to me, and especially to the people of the modern scientific age? True, modern man has his intractable problems, which are like the *hālāhala* poison generated during the *samudra-manthan;* apart from the fear of an impending nuclear war, there are the endemic fears of psychic and nervous breakdowns and drug and crime and sex explosions, within the society. What can Śiva of the myth, living far away in Mount Kailāsa in Tibet, now under Communist China, do to alleviate these sufferings of modern man? That is a legitimate question.

But, says Vedānta, the Śiva of the myth is only a symbol of the real Śiva, who is not far away in Tibet, but is close to every one of us, being our *Ātman, the One Infinite Self in all.* Our body has the energy to digest the food we take; and that gives us physical energy; when that digestion fails, or becomes weak, that food becomes toxic and generates poisons in the body. So we strengthen our body through nourishing food and exercise and apply anti-toxins also to de-toxicate the body to regain health. Our mind, similarly, has the energy to digest the knowledge we acquire, and that gives us efficiency in life and work. *But we are not able to digest many of our experiences; they become knots and complexes in the psyche, become toxic to the psychic system, and eventually produce nervous and psychic breakdowns, or loss of control over gushing organic cravings and impulses leading to sex and drug and crime explosions.*

6. *Vedānta as the Science of Human Energy Resources*

How are we to handle this kind of psychic toxins? The energy of these toxins cannot be neutralised either by our physical energies produced by diet and nutrition, or by mental energies produced by intellectual knowledge. *It is when we ask this question, seriously and earnestly, that we become capable to respond to the great truth about Śiva of the symbolic myth.* That Truth is that man is essentially that ever-free, ever-pure, and ever-luminous Śiva: *Cidānanda rūpaḥ Śivo' haṁ Śivo' ham*—'I am Śiva, I am Śiva, of the nature of Pure Consciousness and Bliss,' as sung by Saṅkarācārya. Man is essentially divine, says Vivekananda, conveying to modern man the central truth of all Vedānta. This Truth is lying hidden in all men, like butter in milk, says the Upaniṣad, and needs churning to bring it out in a manifest form.The *Amṛtabindu Upaniṣad* majestically declares (verse 20):

> *Ghṛtamiva payasi nigūḍham bhûte bhūte vasati vijnanam;*
> *manasa manthana- bhūtena,*
> *Satataṁ manthayitavyam manasā manthāna-bhūtena—*

'Like the butter hidden in milk, Pure Consciousness resides in every being. That must be brought out by constant churning by the churning rod of the mind.'

If *samudra-manthan*, or churning of the ocean, includes this churning of one's life and experience also, to realize this truth of the Śiva nature of man, then the churning of external nature through physical sciences and technology will pose no serious danger to man, even if it produces *hālāhala* and other poisons; for man's Śiva nature, now awakened, will digest all such poisons.

So the myth points out to man, firstly, the truth of his inalienable Śiva nature, and secondly, his need to awaken himself to this truth, and thirdly, nature has given man the organic capacity to achieve this and be free.

This is the true meaning and scope of *Yoga,* and not just a few *āsanās* or physical exercises. or *prāṇāyāma* and similar other exercises. Yoga, according to Vedānta, is the science and art and technique of the spiritual life, by which man generates in himself spiritual energy resources to meet and overcome the challenges of his inner life, just as he meets and overcomes his external challenges through his physical and intellectual energy resources. To be a master of the external world while remaining a slave and a creature of the blind energies of the inner world, is the tragedy of modern man. That tragedy can be eliminated, if modern man understands this great truth of Śiva through the help of the great science of human energy resources developed by Vedānta and Yoga—that behind our body, behind our sensory system, behind even our psychic system, is our divine nature as the Ātman, infinite and immortal; that human energy resources are organised in an ascending scale of *sukṣmā, subtlety, mahāntaśca, immensity, and pratyagātma-bhūtaśca, inwardness,* from the outer physical body and the muscular system, through the nervous and psychic systems, to the innermost Self, the Ātman, the Śiva nature present in all beings.

7. *Impact of the Truth of Śiva on the Modern Mind*

Whenever I have presented this myth, and the profound spiritual truth of which it is but a symbol, to several audiences in the West, the impact has been tremendous and immediate, because they felt its direct reference and relevance to their contemporary personal life and social situation. They grasp the truth that no muscular energy or its mechanized multiples, or intellectual energy, highly augmented in this amazing space age, can save modern man. Only the energy of God can save the modern world from disaster, and that energy is present behind everyone, not far away but within man itself, like the infinite quantum energy-field behind every finite and fleeting quantum-energy particle in modern physics. Not only is there a science of the spiritual energy resources in man, but also there is a technique of manifesting that energy, and Vedānta adds, as pointed out before, that nature has endowed man with the organic capacity to seek this truth, to realize it, and to attain true freedom, fearlessness, and fulfilment.

The significance of this truth for personal life and for inter-personal relations is immense. Man is engaged in the 'churning' of the 'ocean' of life. He or she goes to school, takes a degree, secures a job, marries, rears children, involves in social activities, seeks the appreciation of one's fellow human beings. All these are part of that churning; all these are fine and beautiful. But while engaged in all these, problems arise, personal and inter-personal; some of them turn out to be toxic, poisonous. Unfortunately, man does not know anything about these strange non-physical toxins and how to deal with them; he finds them inconvenient and distressing, 'Ah, in the very temple of delight, veiled melancholy has her sovereign shrine!', sings the poet. So what do we do in our daily life? We just shove them aside and try to forget them. Or a husband shoves them towards his wife, and the wife towards her husband; both want only the good things coming out of the churning of life. What happens to the poison thus shoved aside? It accumulates; in due course, it explodes into psychic and social maladies, mild, serious, and more serious.

Suppose we could have with us 'anti-toxins' to deal with them, and to eliminate them, as and when they arise, as in the case of our physical toxins. What beautiful spiritual health humanity will then have, to match and over-match man's physical health and well being! Can we not expect our versatile physical sciences to help us with such spiritual anti-toxins also? The answer, even from many scientists, apart from intelligent laymen, is an emphatic 'no'. 'Science can denature plutonium, but it cannot denature evil in the heart of man', says Einstein emphatically. The only way left is to turn to the science of religion, the science of the inner nature of man, as expounded in Vedānta and Yoga.

Vedānta says to man: Invoke the energy of Śiva, ever present within you, to digest all such toxins. As expressed in the *Kuṇḍalinı* Yoga, that Śiva nature becomes awakened through our moral and spiritual life, when the *Kuṇḍalinı,* our packet of psychic energy, now sleeping or functioning at the lowest three of the six psychic centres in our spinal column, rises to the *Sahasrāra,* the thousand-petalled seventh centre in the cerebral system, and merges with Śiva who always resides there. Every step in this upward movement, which is but a by-product of the moral and spiritual life that man lives in the very context of one's daily life, brings more and more spiritual energy resources into his or her hands. This spiritual efficiency must be joined to the physical and intellectual efficiency, already achieved by modern man, in order to give him peace and total life fulfilment.

8. *Human Digestion: Physical, Intellectual, and Spiritual*

Śiva literally means what is auspicious, beneficial, and good. 'There is none good, save one, and that is God', says Jesus. And God, or the Kingdom of Heaven, is within us, he assures us further. If we are aware of this truth all the time, we develop tremendous spiritual capacity to digest and assimilate all our experiences of joy and sorrow, victory and defeat, and all traumatic experiences. We then fully enjoy the horse-ride of our life, and never become its victim by allowing the horse of our life to enjoy the joy of the ride at our cost! Swami Vivekananda once told Sister Nivedita:

> If, in the future India, our women, becoming scientific, modern, and practical, practises a little religion by occasionally pausing, in the midst of their work, and uttering Siva, Śiva, thus reminding themselves of their intrinsic Śiva nature, that would be enough spiritual practice for them.

What a wonderful teaching! How simple, and yet, how efficacious!

While I was on a lecture tour in the United States, I used to tell my audiences at parlour talks, that I like the good physical digestion possessed by the American people; they enjoy strong physical food like hamburghers and kentucky fried chickens! The same is also true about our people here. And that is good. It is good to be able to digest the various strong and tasty foods of our diverse cultural regions. But the difficulty arises when they, as well as we, come to the plane of intellectual food. In that field, unfortunately, their and our digestion is weak, and everywhere people seek soft pre-digested intellectual food, Go to the college, university, and public libraries in Delhi and watch; you will find very few people going in for serious literature; all the flimsy books are taken out many times round, and very few readers are found for the solid serious books.

I was twice invited for reception and lecture to the famous

Cleveland Public Library in Ohio State, U.S.A. It is one of the biggest libraries in the world, rich in its collections, and second only to the Library of Congress. There are over a hundred thousand books on India alone. When I asked the librarian whether the valuable books of the library are taken out by the readers, I got only a sorry 'no'. That is the story all over the world; that is the situation in our own universities as well; students seek soft and pre-digested intellectual food, even in the field of their prescribed study courses, avoiding to read even the text books, much less the original sources. There is a growing physical digestion, but intellectual digestion has deteriorated. It is no wonder then that the most important third digestion, namely, the spiritual, is little in evidence. And it is also no wonder that, maladies of the mind, and maladies of the spirit, are ever on the increase!

9. *Education as Digestion and Assimilation of Ideas*

Man everywhere needs to increase his intellectual digestion, to make his secular education efficient. This is more needed in our own country. When we study a subject, we must thoroughly digest and *assimilate* it. Take, for instance, the study of history. When an Indian student studies the history of India, and digests and assimilates the subject well, he or she becomes a good patriot and a good citizen. One grasps the truth of his or her country's history that, through our internecine quarrels and want of a national loyalty and dedication, we had become victims of foreign invasions and native exploitations again and again. And this truth gets burnt into the student's soul, and he or she vows to oneself: My country shall not be a slave again; my life and outlook and conduct shall stand guarantee for it. This is the fruit of *mental digestion and assimilation* of history. The same with respect to other subjects, like science, grammar, civics, sociology etc.

Swami Vivekananda presented this idea of education as the *digestion and assimilation of knowledge and ideas* in a fine passage in the course of his Madras lecture on *The Future of India (The Complete Works*, Vol. III, p. 302):

> 'Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making *assimilation of ideas*. If you have assimilated five ideas and made

them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.

Yathā kharaḥ chandana bhāra-vāhī,
Bhārasya vettā, na tu candanasya—

'The ass carrying its load of sandalwood knows only the weight, not the value, of the sandalwood' (Bhartṛhari: *Nīti-Śataka*).

'If education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages in the world, and encyclopaedias are the *ṛṣis*.'

By only swallowing ideas and information, and 'vomiting' them, as it were, in the examination answer paper, we have converted our education to the status of the ass carrying its load of sandalwood, knowing only the weight, not the value, of the knowledge acquired. That is education as *stuffing the brain*, and not *training the mind*.

10. *Man's Inner Health: The Product of Digestion and Assimilation of all Experiences*

Then we come to the third dimension of digestion—spiritual digestion. It is the capacity to digest and assimilate all experiences. Either you digest an experience and become strong, assimilating the energy of the experience to your already existing personality energy, or you get digested by the experience, which also takes away some of the initial personality energy you had with you. The former is the way to inner health; the latter is the way to inner ill health. All psychic failures and nervous breakdowns are the indication of this indigestion, by man, of his experiences, or of this digestion, of man, by his own experiences. What modern psychiatry and psycho-analysis call personality distorting conflicts, and complexes, and traumas in the human psyche are but undigested experiences, are but the products of this digestion of man by his own experiences. It is spiritual strength alone that helps man to digest all his experiences, that helps him to leave no undigested experiences to become tangled complexes; and that kind of strength can come only by awakening the Śiva nature always inherent in him or her. That is the path to *prevent* all psychic distortions and breakdowns, while psychiatry and psycho-analysis are only *curative* paths, to be resorted to, once such a breakdown has occurred.

All moral strength is but the by-product of man's awakening to the truth of his Śiva nature. Here is a man offering me a million-dollar bribe; can I resist the temptation? How many can stand it? Why a million dollar?A few rupees are enough to break the will, and the intelligence, of many many people, even with high university degrees!. How poor must be such people, even though they may be having a comfortable bank account! and high intellectual wealth also! This is the spiritual poverty afflicting increasing numbers of people in our own country and abroad. But very few among them have realized that they are suffering from an *inward* poverty. They understand well the strength arising from the energy resource of money, of muscle, of brain. But all these types of strength will be washed away by even a small temptation of sex or money—*kāma-kāncan,* as Sri Ramakrishna expressed it—whereas, spiritual strength will hold a man steady against waves and waves of all such temptations. And if this is not wealth, if this is not strength, what is wealth and what is strength? A tree that is rooted firm in the soil will stand steady against all the winds that blow; but a lightly rooted tree will fall down even by a gentle breeze. A house built on rock will stand, says Jesus; one built on sand collapses easily:

> 'A wise man built his house on rock; and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it fell not; for it was founded on rock. But a foolish man built his house on sand; and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was its fall!'

This is the rooting of man in the Śiva consciousness; this is building the character of man on the rock foundation of his Śiva nature. Modern man, and also modern children, show themselves to be more and more susceptible to the formation of complexes and traumas, only because the roots of their life-tree touch nowhere near their inherent Śiva nature. More and more people must train themselves to touch their inherent Śiva nature, occasionally, to begin with, and permanently, later. If our country can produce a few millions of such people, we shall be truly great as a people. Then will the present *dubious* status of India as the *largest* democracy will be transformed into the *coveted status* as the *greatest* democracy. Even a little of this Śiva consciousness can give great strength to a man or woman, assures Sri Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (II.40):

Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyte mahato bhayāt. It will make man compassionate and naturally oriented to service of his fellowman; its full realization will endow one with infinite strength and infinite compassion.

Swami Vivekananda was fond of narrating an episode of the Indian Mutiny of 1857: A British soldier had stabbed a Hindu monk; the soldiers of the Mutiny caught hold of that soldier and presented him before the dying *mahātma* or holy man, saying: please give your word, and we shall straightaway kill this soldier. The *mahātma* turned to the soldier and , uttering 'you are also the same Ātman as I am, *Tat Tvam Asi* (That Thou Art), he expired. That is strength! That is strength! exclaimed Vivekananda, after the narration.

Thus, in normal human life also, true character-strength is spiritual strength, which enables one to *process* all raw materials of sensory inputs and turn them into beautiful and beneficial and good finished products of love, compassion, spirit of service and dedication, and capacity to stand easily all temptations, big and small. As in mining, we take raw ore from the earth, process it, and finally turn it into a highly valuable brick of gold, so do we with our daily experiences, in the strength of our Śiva nature, processing hatred into love, violence into non-violence, tensions into peace.

11. *The Atman as the Eternal Focus of Spiritual Health and Energy in Man*

None of these can be achieved by mere intellectual strength; even the greatest intellects have fallen before even small temptations, have failed to process the raw materials of daily experience into finished products of character excellence. The intellect has to be evolved further into a higher faculty called by Vedānta ***Buddhi,*** enlightened Reason. Says Śri Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā,* about this processing of the energies of lust and greed, which are the source of all crime, delinquency, tension, and peacelessness, into the energy of a beautiful character (III. 47):

Evaṁ buddheḥ paraṁ buddhvā
saṁstabhyātmānamātmanā;
Jahi śatruṁ mahā-bāho
kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam—

'Thus, realizing (the Ātman or Śiva nature) that is superior to *buddhi* (but with the aid of the pure *buddhi*), and disciplining the self by the Self, conquer, O Mighty-armed, (your) insatiable enemy in the form of lust!'

In this, and in the preceding six verses, concluding chapter three, the *Gītā* proclaims the truth that the Self of man is ever pure and free, and that it is never tarnished by any sin or crime which afflict only man's sense organs, mind, and intellect. These three alone, say the verses, are the focusses of all moral infection which afflicts man and society. Such infection can be destroyed by bringing into play, in human life, the energy of that ever-pure Śiva nature of man which is ever there behind, in his or her depths, behind the body, sense organs, mind, and intellect. Let man take his or her stand on that shining truth, says all Vedānta, and then deal with his or her life and its problems, both individual and social.

12. *Two Ways of Controlling Human Emotions*

Twentieth-century biology, in its micro and molecular levels, is developing various devices to help man control his emotional disturbances. In fact, in America today, there are many patients in mental hospitals with tiny electrodes planted in particular areas in their brain. When such a patient is in an angry mood and uncontrollable, he or she or the nurse has only to press a switch, and the patient becomes quiet again. Professor Delgado of M. I. T. experimented with a charging bull in whose brain electrodes had been inserted, and made it quiet and meek by pressing a button! Uncontrollable human emotions can now be controlled by such devices. But is it desirable that, apart from patients in mental hospitals, even normal people resort to such external devices to deal with their emotions? There is no escape, no alternative, except to resort increasingly to such external devices, if there is no uninfected dimension in man, if he is only a body-mind complex, as modern materialism and behaviouristic psychology teach. If these ideologies, which have no insight into the depth dimension of man such as Vedanta achieved in its *adhyātma-vidyā,* in its science of man as the Ātman, become widely spread in the world, we can expect to see more and more people carrying many tiny electrodes inserted into their brains, and pressing or releasing their switches as occasion demands. The wife can calm her excited angry husband by pressing such a switch, and *vice versa!*

But, wide-spread use of such devices will convert human society into an animal farm, controlled and guided from the outside by bio-engineers! This is a dismal prospect. The other bright and hope-inspiring prospect is the wide-spread understanding of the science and technique of spirituality, the awakening of man's inherent Śiva nature, the development, by each human being, of the vast spiritual energy resources lying within, and digesting all complex-producing poisons of experience, like Śiva of the myth digesting the *Hālāhala* poision. These are the only two ways of disciplining human emotions—control from the outside, through bio-engineering, and control from within, through spiritual self-discipline. With the strength coming from the latter, man can not only digest his own psychic poisons, but also use that strength, to go and help others also to digest their psychic poisons, which is the best way to worship the One Divine in the heart of all, as the verse of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, given earlier, told us: *Paramārādhanaṁ tat hi puruṣasya akhilatmanaḥ*.

'Every *Jiva* (soul) is Śiva; and the service of the *Jīva* is the worship of Śiva', says Sri Ramakrishna.

13. *Conclusion*

When in the course of my address to the Moscow State University in October 1977 on *Swami Vivekananda: His Humanism*, I spoke about this Vedāntic teaching of the inherent divinity of man as the spiritual basis of Vivekananda's humanism, and the need for Marxist humanism, as much as Western humanism, to base their philosophy of man on this inalienable focus of human dignity and excellence; I found the response of the audience hearty and spontaneous. It is this Vedāntic science of human possibilities, with the truth of the Śiva nature of man as the highest of those possibilities, that is illustrated by this interesting and humanly relevant myth of *samudra-manthan*.

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ANCIENT INSIGHTS AND MODERN DISCOVERIES*

1. *Introduction*

I am extremely happy to be present here this afternoon to participate in this symposium on *Ancient Insights and Modern Discoveries* organized by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. During the two days when the session will be on, there will be several great minds coming to tell us about the relevance of this subject for us in India and also for all humanity.

The Bhavan has been engaged in this kind of work for more than thirty years; and this symposium organized by the Bhavan has a uniqueness about it -- the effort to relate the great wisdom of the past ages with the vast fund of knowledge acquired in modern times, and both to the pressing needs of man in the modern age. This symposium, and the further follow-up steps contemplated in the wake of this symposium, are meant to give us an insight into the unity of all knowledge and the oneness of Reality, in spite of the differences in the approach to the same by the sages of the past and the scientists of today.

2. *India's Vision of Unity in Diversity*

Our country is specially gifted with the capacity to see the underlying harmony behind the world of division and discord. That capacity we need to retain and develop further; for, the world of knowledge acquired by the human mind is vast and varied today, but modern man has not been able to relate all these bits of knowledge to each other and bring harmony to his own life—neither between his external and inner life, nor between what are termed ancient and modern, faith and reason, religion and science. Everywhere, there is conflict and division; and this has its impact on human life which becomes fragmented, and on men and women

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*Keynote Address at the opening session of the two-day Symposium on *Ancient Insights and Modern Discoveries* held on 30 April 1977 by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay who become alienated. In this context, it is good that we sit together and try to understand what all these mean -- this human distortion in the context of the abundance of scientific knowledge and spiritual insights.

My purpose in standing before you for a few minutes to give this keynote address is to highlight one important aspect of the ancient insights, namely, India's vision of unity in and behind diversity. This diversity has reference not only with regard to the world outside, but with regard to the inner world as well. Our normal experience tells us that we are all separate from each other; each one of us has a distinct individuality; so also is the world outside, full of discrete entities and discrete particles and forces. Ancient India was intrigued by this fact of normal experience and felt a keen urge to probe into it and to find out whether there is a fundamental unity behind this diversity. The very search for knowledge by the human mind has this as its primary motivation. When a baby is born, it is confused by the vast mass of discrete data pouring in upon its mind from the outer world through its five sense organs; its mind is confused; but we can watch the slow growth of knowledge taking place in the baby through his efforts to *understand* that world, first in discrete units and later through their interrelations; it slowly understands the harmony between the discrete individuals and things around it; and every such advance in its knowledge gives it also increasing grip on the world.

3. *Physical Sciences and the Mystery of Man*

Today, we need to carry this great elementary human experience of harmony and synthesis to the highest level. The two great disciplines of man, physical science, dealing with the data of the physical world around us, and religion, dealing with the profound mystery lying within man himself, need to be correlated and brought into harmony, so that man may have a synoptic view of reality and achieve a unified life flowing from it. This is the struggle that is emerging on the horizon of the contemporary world's explosive growth of knowledge.

We are happy to find that, today, the physical sciences themselves have come to the point where, at the farthest reach of their explorations of the external world, they are confronted by the challenge of the profound mystery lying within man himself, his consciousness, his self. Starting with the mystery of the external universe as a baby, and advancing far in the search for the clearing of that mystery as a scientist, physical science, in this century, has become confronted with this profounder mystery of man himself. If the human situation today is afflicted with tension, unfulfilment, and suffering, it is precisely because man's knowledge of himself has not advanced and kept pace with his explosive knowledge of the physical world.

And it is in this neglected field that modern man and modern thought can get tremendous help from the insights of our ancient sages. They also tried to understand the world around them. In fact, as you have heard from other speakers, ancient India has contributed much, according to the then prevailing world standards, to physical sciences. But these scientific contributions are secondary so far as India is concerned, only because India entered, with the same scientific spirit and thoroughness, into another world of investigation, namely, the mystery of man himself. The scientific discipline developed in the search for truth in the outer world became helpful to them in probing into the truths of the inner world and obtaining therefrom profound philosophical and spiritual insights. That is why *it is not a bundle of misty mysteries or obscurantist superstitions that we get out of these insights.* Instead, they are *verified* and *verifiable truths* regarding the true nature of man and the true nature of the universe.

4. *Insights versus Discoveries: Their Interrelationship*

I wish to stress this point that, when we speak of such insights, what is meant is not just a glowing imagination or its fanciful products. On the contrary, they refer to truth, *satyam,* profound truths, *satyasya satyam,* lying in the very heart of nature and in the very depths of the human spirit — truths verified by the sages and offered as verifiable by the rest of humanity.

Some clarification is called for in the use of the term *discoveries*, while referring to the contributions of modern scientists in the field of physical science; and the term *insights,* while referring to the contributions of the ancient sages and seers in the field of spirituality. *All spiritual insights are also discoveries of truths, as all scientific discoveries are also insights into the truths of the physical universe. Discovery* means seeing an already existing thing after removing that which covers it. *Insight* means seeing straight into the heart of things spontaneously and effortlessly, though it cannot come without the strength of much moral and spiritual effort and struggle, what India calls *tapas*, behind it. The first involves much training and labour to make the sense organs and the intellect acute and penetrating. But, in all great discoveries of physical science also, the last stage is often more *a spontaneous insight* than *a laboured discovery*. This is the special feature of the inductive jump in scientific method, where knowledge marches from the known to the unknown. But the spontaneity of this last step depends on the hard labour of the previous steps, without which insight will become reduced to a gamble in guess work and incapable of standing the rigorous scientific test of verification. Insight has a high place in the field of physical science, and also in the field of success in one's life and work in the external world. In these contexts, we can accept its definition as given by psychologist Geraldine Coster (*Yoga and Western Psychology*, Harper Colophen Edition, 1972, p. 92):

> 'It is defined as the capacity for being able to call up a greater variety and number of correlates to any given idea or stimulus, and enables the fortunate possessor to react with 'originality' to given situations."

The distinctiveness of spiritual insights from the above type of insights arises from the fact that the field of operation of the former lies in the most immediate, intimate, and direct field of experience, namely, the inner world of the experiencer, knower, seer, subject, or self, unlike the remote, mediate, and indirect, outer world of the objects or the non-self, of the latter. And the science of spirituality holds that this self or knower is self-luminous, being of the very nature of knowledge or consciousness. Therefore, in this field of search, which transforms knowledge into wisdom, *all knowing tends to be being;* but this cannot be said about our search in the outer world.

Insight denotes seeing within, naturally with the eye of the mind and independently of the physical eyes. Discovery, then, is *out-sight,* obviously with the physical eyes and other external sense organs and instruments helpful to them. But such discovery also involves the mind working on the data presented by man's outsight; and, at this stage, as I said earlier, insight also becomes involved in discovery.

Referring to the interrelation between *discovery* and *insight* as understood in Vedānta, Swami Vivekananda says in his *Karma Yoga (Complete Works*, Vol. I, pp. 27-28):

> 'The goal of mankind is knowledge. That is the one ideal placed before us by Eastern philosophy. Pleasure is not the goal of man, but knowledge. ...
>
> 'Now, this knowledge, again, is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man "knows", should, in strict psychological language, be what he "discovers" or "unveils"; what a man "learns" is really what he "discovers", by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.
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> 'We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth.
>
> 'All knowledge, therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases, it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say, "we are learning"; and the advance of knowledge is made by the advance in this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is the more knowing man; the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant; and the man from whom it has entirely gone is all-knowing, omniscient. There have been omniscient men, and, I believe, there will be yet; and that there will be myriads of them in the cycles to come. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out.'

Commenting on the luminous passage in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (3.4.2): *na dṛṣṭeḥ draṣṭāraṁ paśyeḥ*—'the seer of sight cannot be seen', Śaṅkarācārya says:

Dṛṣṭeḥ draṣṭā hi ātmā. Dṛṣṭiriti dvividhā bhavati, laukikī pāramārthikī ca iti. Tatra laukikī, cakṣuḥ-saṁyuktā *antaḥkaraṇavṛttiḥ. Sa kriyate iti, jāyate vinaśyati ca. Yā tu ātmano dṛṣṭiḥ, agnyuṣṇa-prakāśādivat, sā ca draṣṭuḥ svarūpatvat jnayate, na vinaśyati ca—*

'The Ātman is, verily, the seer of sight. Sight is of two types, namely, laukiki, i.e. relative or worldly or physical, and *pāramārthiki,* i.e. supremely true or spiritual. Among these, the physical denotes the pulsation of the mind connected with the physical eyes; that is a process and, as such, is something that arises and disappears. The sight of the Ātman, on the other hand, does not arise, and does not disappear, since it is of the very nature of the seer, like the heat and luminosity of fire.'

5. *Our Rich Cultural Heritage: Need to Exercise Discrimination*

It is because ancient India had come in touch with truths of a profound dimension, both of nature outside and of nature within man, that she could build up such an enduring structure of culture that has come down to us undimmed in glory and vigour. It is good for us to know today what these profound truths are, and discriminate them from bundles of superstitions and obscurantist ideas and beliefs which also we have inherited from our past. Let us be fully aware of the importance of this subject and treat this symposium as only the beginning of an inquiry into those insights which can stand the test of science. Let us be frankly aware that we have inherited bundles of superstitions in our tradition. But in the midst of all these superstitions, which became heavier and heavier during the last few centuries, we shall also come across profound and shining truths, which are being highlighted by the discoveries of the modern physical scientists themselves, and which also respond to the deep-felt spiritual hunger of modern man. Apart from the great scientists who came in the last century, and who spoke glowingly about some of the valuable contributions of the Indian mind to the world of scientific truths, post-war years are witnessing increasing numbers of Western scientists telling us appreciatively about the scientific value of many of the insights in our philosophy and spirituality.

Therefore, there is plenty of work for us to discriminate between what is true and abiding and what is false and fleeting in our tradition. In our philosophy, the Vedānta, this particular attitude and process called discrimination—*viveka* as we call it—has a high place. Vedānta prescribes *viveka* not only with respect to tradition, but with respect to all experience in general, which comes to all men in a mixed-up form — the *naisargika,* i. e. natural and untutored, mix-up of truth and untruth, real and unreal, and right and wrong—*satyā-nṛte mithunī-kṛtya naisargikoyaṁ loka-vyavahāraḥ,* as Śaṅkarācārya expresses it in the opening words of his commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtras.*

When we apply this rigorously discriminating mind to the body of philosophical and spiritual insights bequeathed to humanity by our ancient sages, we shall be immensely gratified to find that, not only do they stand the rigorous test of modern physical science, but also take this science itself to higher levels of knowledge and experience. We shall be happy to know that we developed a culture on the basis of a philosophy of man derived from a depth study of man and nature. Behind the development of that philosophy by the great sages of our Upaniṣads lay the supreme stimulus of a passion for truth and a passion for human happiness and welfare. They were prepared to sacrifice everthing for that love of truth, including the tenets of their national dogmas and creeds. That passion finds expression in many passages of the Upaniṣads, especially in that famous utterance of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad,* which today adorns the crest of our republic as our national motto: *Satyameve Jayate* – 'Truth alone triumphs'. They sacrificed everything, including the attachment to their own egos, in their search for truth.

6. *Knowledge to Grow into Wisdom*

This is the attitude we need to develop in ourselves today, when we try to understand our ancient insights, relate them to the great discoveries of modern Western physical science, and place before humanity, in India and abroad, a body of tested knowledge which has risen to the level of wisdom. This is also the aspiration and direction of modern scientific knowledge and of the modern world. Discrete pieces of knowledge cannot give us that wisdom. A synoptic vision alone can convert all discrete pieces of knowledge into luminous and saving wisdom. Such knowledge is growing explosively day by day, but this exploding knowledge can be brought to some order and meaningful significance only through the help of wisdom born of insight.

After the Second World War, this desire to make knowledge rise to wisdom has become insistent, due to the distortions such knowledge has already produced in man and in the social situation. One of the most influential thinkers of the modern period was the late Bertrand Russell. In his post-war lectures collected in the book *Impact of Science on Society*, Russell says (p. 120-21):

> 'We are in the middle of a race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends.'

And towards the end of the para, he warns:

> 'It follows that unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow'.

This statement brings before us the urgency, from the practical point of view, of man rising from mere knowledge to wisdom. It is that wisdom, consisting of a body of authentic spiritual insights, that sages everywhere, and Eastern sages in particular, have given to humanity.

This symposium has great scope in the work it has placed before itself, namely, *unifying human life by unifying the mind of man*. With that unity will come harmony in the individual and collective life as well. The physical sciences themselves have been advancing, specially during these post-war years, in the direction of philosophical and spiritual insight. In fact, all the physical sciences themselves are engaged in this search for unifying knowledge from out of bits of discrete knowledge, through this capacity for insight. The very methods of science are based on this urge to unify human knowledge and experience. That insight, as referred to earlier, enables physical science to take an inductive jump from the known to the unknown, to get new knowledge from old knowledge. This phenomenon has achieved new heights in quantum and relativity physics, where physical science has crossed the barrier of the *objective* physical realm of the observed *sense objects* or data, to enter into the strange new realm of super-sensory realities, and landed physical science and modern man on the fascinating shores of the mystery of the observing *subject*, the infinite mystery of his own consciousness. This datum of the consciousness of the observer has now emerged as the profoundest mystery at the farthest reach of modern physical science.

7. *The Advaitic Vision*

Experience reveals the presence of the datum of consciousness, of awareness, of knowledge, which is in you, in me, and in all of us. The sages of the Upaniṣads tried to understand the meaning and significance of it, to go deep into it, particularly in its unique expression at the human level as consciousness of the subject or self. By going beyond, through meditation or inward penetration, the limitations of their sense organs and sense-bound mind, they transcended the limitations of this datum of consciousness in separate sensebound expressions of ego or self consciousness, and realized its true nature as infinite and non-dual. And they realized the world also and its diversities as configurations of that one pure Consciousness. They discovered the supreme truth of *Advaita,* or Non-duality, as the nature of this ultimate reality of pure Consciousness, just as the modern physicist, in the limited physical context of his research, has almost arrived at the unified energy field behind the diverse observed data of physical nature, and is now knocking at the gate of the unique datum of consciousness itself, the datum of the observing subject.

This *Advaitic* vision reveals the fundamental unity behind all diversities in the universe, both of the physical and the non-physical,—behind the non-living and the living—behind what Vedānta calls the *acit* and the *cit.* There is also a fundamental unity between the reality outside and the reality within. The words and the concepts such as inside and outside, external and internal, says Vedānta, do not cut up reality itself; they are useful in the beginning for purposes of study and research, but do not limit reality itself. There is only one ocean surrounding the surface of the earth; but there is no harm, if we, for study or for practical purposes, call that ocean by different names, such as the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, etc.

The sages of India coined precise scientific concepts and terminologies to convey their vision of unity. They used the term Brahman to denote the unity of the external world, and the term

Ātman to denote the unity of the internal world; and they discovered the unity of the external, or *parāk rūpa,* of reality, with the internal or *pratyak rūpa,* of reality, by equating Brahman as Ātman; by equating the ultimate reality as Pure Consciousness, as *cit-svarūpa;* by equating the *prāṇaṁ vai brahma* and *khaṁ brahma*—'Brahman, verily, is energy' and 'Brahman is the infinite reality of the Void', with *kaṁ brahma,* i.e. 'Brahman is bliss' and, therefore, with consciousness, as the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (4.10.4) puts it in a pithy utterance.

'All these are profound insights gained by the sages of the Upaniṣads through meditation'—*dhyānikaṁ sarvamevaitat yadetat abhiśabditam,* says the *Manu Smṛti (6. 82):*

'Realize (Brahman) through the yoga of faith, devotion, and meditation'—*Śraddhā-bhakti-dhyānayogād-avaihi,* says the *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* (1.2). The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says (6.9):

Na saṁdṛśe tiṣṭhati rūpamasya
 na cakṣuṣā paśyati kaścanainam;
Hṛdā manīṣā manasābhikḷṛpto
 ya etat viduḥ amṛtāste bhavanti—

'His form is not within the field of sight; none can see Him with the physical eye; He is revealed in the heart by that mind that is fully under the control of *buddhi* (pure enlightened reason or super-mind). Those who realize this become immortal'.

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* proclaims (1.16):

Sarvavyāpinamātmānam
 Kṣire sarpirivārpitam;
Ātmavidyā-tapo-mūlam
 tadbrahmopaniṣad param—

'Like butter present (everywhere) in milk is the Ātman pervading everything; that is the supreme mystery of Brahman realized through the *tapas,* or knowledge-discipline, of the science of the Ātman.

8. *Ancient India's Contributions to the Positive Sciences*

Though our country's greatest contributions lie in these fields of philosophy and religion, as I said earlier, we have also to our credit great discoveries in the field of the physical sciences. But during the last few centuries, we became stagnant in this latter field, and the modern West stole a march over us, over China, and over the rest of the world. We are grateful to the West for this. And, inspired by the modern West, we have re-started our scientific march, and it has gained momentum after our achievement of freedom. And our ancient hold on philosophy and religion has continued in the modern period through outstanding luminaries like Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Ramana Maharshi, and others. We are slowly becoming aware of our country's past scientific achievements and, through it, becoming aware also that our nation had, in our earlier period, taken all knowledge for its investigation, and not just a segment of it, and had understood the term *Veda* in that broad sense. Even though some of our scientists and scholars have published a few books on some aspect or other of India's contributions to the physical sciences, there is urgent need to bring out, systematically, a series of volumes on *Science and Civilization in India,* on the lines of Joseph Needham's famous series of eight volumes on *Science and Civilization in China.* That will fill a big gap in the understanding of our age-old national quest for knowledge, as much by our people as by the world outside.

9. *Post-war Physics and the Advaitic Vision*

When I was travelling in the United States in October and November 1976, I came across a very unique book on post-war physics, which has much relevance to what I have said above, and to the theme of this symposium that we are holding here. It is *The Tao of Physics* by Professor Fritjof Capra of the Theoretical Physics Department of Berkeley University, U.S.A. *Tao* is the Chinese word for the *Divine Way;* and Professor Capra tells us, in the very opening pages of his book, that science is not, physics is not, all technology. There is such a thing as pure science which is essentially a search for truth, an effort to understand the true nature of the world in which we live. And, in this search, physics has come to a point where physical science is already confronted by the profound mystery of man himself, his awareness, his consciousness; that it is time that modern scientists pursue this subject much deeper; and that, when they do so, they will find that the great sages and mystics of the East, particularly Hindu, Buddhist, and Taoist, had already arrived at similar, but much deeper, conclusions, hundreds of years earlier, by direct experiential research *in depth* into this datum of consciousness.Says Capra (p. 25):

'This book aims at improving the image of science by showing that there is an essential harmony between the spirit of Eastern wisdom and Western science. It attempts to suggest that modern physics goes far beyond technology, that the way—or *Tao*—of physics can be a path with a heart, a way to spiritual knowledge and self-realization.'

In the last but one chapter of the book, Professor Capra says (p. 300):

'In modern physics, the question of consciousness has arisen in connection with the observation of atomic phenomena. Quantum theory has made it clear that these phenomena can only be understood as links in a chain of processes, the end of which lies in the consciousness of the human observer.

In the words of (physicist) Eugene Wigner (in his book *Symmetries and Reflections—Scientific Essays*, p. 172):

"It was not possible to formulate the laws (of quantum theory) in a fully consistent way without reference to consciousness."

Professor Capra comments on this remark of Wigner *(ibid.)*:

'If physicists really want to include the nature of human consciousness in their realm of research, a study of Eastern ideas may well provide them with stimulating new viewpoints.'

Towards the end of the book, Professor Capra says (p. 305):

'In contrast to the mystic, the physicist begins his enquiry into the essential nature of things by studying the material world. Penetrating into ever deeper realms of matter, he has become aware of the essential unity of all things and events. More than that, he has also learnt that he himself and his consciousness are an integral part of this unity. Thus the mystic and the physicist arrive at the same conclusion; one starting from the inner realm, the other from the outer world. The harmony between their views confirm the ancient Indian wisdom that *Brahman*, the ultimate reality without, is identical to *Ātman*, the reality within.'

Here is a wonderful idea presented to us by modern science, echoing the ideas presented by the ancient sages of China and India, that reality is one, and that we can study it from the outside as well as from the inside. It is good for us to know this position. Says Professor Capra about this vision of basic unity (*ibid.*, p. 140):

'In Eastern mysticism, this universal interwovenness always includes the human observer and his or her consciousness, and this is also true in atomic physics. ...

> "Natural Science", says Heisengerg (*Physics and Philosophy*, p. 81) "does not simply describe and explain nature; it is part of the inter-play between nature and ourselves."'

It is here that we find the spirit of our Upaniṣads slowly approaching and penetrating the deeper levels of modern science. So far as India is concerned, she never made that water-tight compartment between physical science and the science of spirituality that the West had harboured till recently. Even the mind of man is treated as material in Indian philosophy; mind is only matter in subtle form. Accordingly, that conflict between mind and matter, which bedevils Western philosophy, never arose in our philosophy. This great subject of the harmony between ancient insights and modern discoveries, interest in which is now assuming international dimensions, is to be tackled by us in the light of our own great vision of unity behind diversity. In his speech on *Absolute and Manifestation*, delivered in London as long ago as in 1896, Swami Vivekananda had said (*Complete Works*, Vol. II, Ninth Edition, p. 140):

> 'Do you not see whither science is tending? The Hindu nation proceeded through the study of the mind. The European nations start from external nature, and now they too are coming to the same results. We find that searching through the mind we at last come to that Oneness, that universal One, the Internal Soul of everything, the essence and reality of everything. ... Through material science, we come to the same Oneness.'

10. *The Union of Insights and Discoveries in Sir J.C. Bose*

It is not only just now that modern science is sensing this fundamental unity of the universe. Towards the end of the last century and the beginning of the present century, our country produced a great scientist in Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose who, with his ingenious scientific instruments and bold scientific experiments in physics, botany, and human physiology, made startling discoveries, and *demonstrated*, for the first time in the context of modern Western science, and *re-authenticated* in the context of his own country's ancient insights, the fundamental unity of metals, plants, and man. Neglected during the intervening decades, his great work in this field is receiving increasing attention from scientists today in this post-war period. It is good for us in India today to know that our ancient insights into the spiritual oneness of the whole universe received re-authentication from one of our own modern scientists.

who did it through the rigorous methods of modern scientific investigation and discovery, and who was also fully conscious of this close kinship between ancient insights and modern scientific discoveries, as stated by himself in the following concluding portion of his address to the Royal Society, London, on 10 May 1901:

> 'I have shown you this evening autographic records of the history of stress and strain in the living and the non-living. How similar are the writings! So similar indeed that you cannot tell one apart from the other. We have watched the responsive pulse wax and wane in the one as in the other. We have seen response sinking under fatigue, becoming exalted under stimulants, and being killed by poisons in the non-living as well as in the living.
>
> 'Amongst such phenomena, how can we draw a line of demarcation and say, here the physical ends and there the physiological begins? Such absolute barriers do not exist.
>
> 'Do not these records tell us of some property of matter common and persistent? Do they not show us that the responsive processes seen in life have been foreshadowed in non-life? That the physiological is related to the physico-chemical? That there is no abrupt break, but a uniform and continuous march of Law?
>
> 'If it be so, we shall but turn with renewed courage to the investigation of mysteries which have too long eluded us. For every step of science had been made by the inclusion of what seemed contradictory or capricious in a new harmonious simplicity. Her advances have been always towards a clearer perception of the underlying unity in apparent diversity.
>
> 'It was when I came upon the mute witness of this self-made records, and perceived in them one phase of a pervading unity that bears within it all things—the mote that quivers in ripples of light, the teeming life upon our earth, and the radiant suns that shine above us—*it was then that I understood, for the first time, a little of that message proclaimed by my ancestors on the banks of the Ganges 30 centuries ago:*
>
> '"They who see but one, in all the changing manifoldness of this universe, unto them belongs eternal truth, unto none else, unto none else."'

When the speech ended and the great applause that followed quietened down, says a contemporary report, one of the famous physicists of the time, Sir Robert Austin, who was present at that meeting and whom Bose described as the greatest authority on metals, said in delight:

> 'I have all my life studied the properties of metals—I am happy to think that they have life.'

And he wanted to hear again the verse from the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* that Bose had quoted at the end of the lecture and then asked Bose:

'Can you tell me whether there is a future life—what will become of me after my body dies?'

About the impact of Bose's discoveries on the contemporary scientific world, Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird say in their recent book: *The Secret Life of Plants* (p. 114):

'During Bose's trip to London and Europe in 1919 and 1920, the distinguished scientist, Professor John Arthur Thomson, wrote in the *New Statesman:*

'"It is in accordance with the genius of India that the investigator should press further towards unity than we have yet hinted at, should seek to correlate responses and memory expression in the living with their analogous in organic matter, and should see in anticipation lines of physics and physiology and of psychology converging and meeting. These are questionings of a prince of experimenters whom we are proud to welcome in our midst today."

'The usually reserved *Times* (of London) wrote.

'"While we in England were still steeped in the rude empiricism of barbaric life, the subtle Easterner had swept the universe into a synthesis and had seen the *one* in all its changing manifestations."'

11. *Tattvam versus Matam*

I have referred earlier to modern physics, in its deeper nuclear dimension, also coming across the mystery of the human consciousness as a significant datum inseparable from the physical data observed and studied by it. Here, we have a wonderful point of contact. From now on, modern science can investigate how these two relate to each other and thus help to create a unifying philosophy of reality as a whole. So far as India is concerned, her ancient Vedānta achieved this unity which finds expression in several passages of its vast literature. I give below one such profound utterance; it is from the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad Kārikā* by Gauḍapāda, who was Śaṅkarācārya's teacher's teacher (2.38):

Tattvam ādhyātmikaṁ dṛṣṭvā
tattvaṁ dṛṣṭvā tu bāhyataḥ·
Tattvībhūtaḥ tadārāmaḥ
tattvāt apracyuto bhavet—

'Realizing the *tattvam*, or Truth, hidden in the internal world of the self, and realizing the *tattvam* hidden in the external world (of the not-self), one becomes one with the Truth, delights in that Truth, and does not fall away from that Truth'.

The Sanskrit word *tattvam* means what in physical science is called objective truth, as different from subjective impression or fancy; the truth behind facts or sense data. It means 'the real nature of a thing' as revealed by investigation: *tasya bhāvaḥ tattvam*, as Śaṅkarācārya defines it. *Tattvam* seen in the coloured light of our own personal preferences is known as *matam* in Sanskrit. *Tattvam* therefore denotes truth and *matam* denotes belief or opinion. There is plenty of scope for *matam* in human life; but it must be based on *tattvam; then it is constructive and the source of harmony in human life; but when divorced from tattvam and held with passion and intensity, it becomes dogmatism, and leads to conflict and violence. Matam* is also the Sanskrit word for religion; there are many *matams* or religions, like *Vaiṣṇava matam*, *Śākta matam*, *Śaiva matam*, *Bauddha matam*, *Christian matam*, and *Islam matam;* but *tattvam* or Truth behind all of them is one only. The creative and peaceful role of *matam* in the light of the all-comprehending vision of *tattvam* is expounded by the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* in a famous and majestic verse (I.2.11):

Vadanti tat tattvavidaḥ
    tattvaṁ yat jñānam advayam;
Brahmeti paramātmeti
    bhagavān iti śabdyate—

'One and the same non-dual Pure Consciousness is the *tattvam*, Truth, which is spoken of by the knowers of *tattvam* as the Brahman (the Impersonal Absolute, by the philosophers), as the *Paramātman* (the Supreme Self, by the mystics), and as the *Bhagavān* (the Supreme and Blessed Personal God, by the *bhaktas* or devotees)'.

12. *The Search for Tattvam: Its Impact on Human Life*

The sages of the Upaniṣads were in search of this one *tattvam;* and they discovered it first in themselves behind their ego and then in the universe outside, and they called it Ātman or Brahman, of the nature of one infinite Pure Consciousness. The very first Upaniṣad, namely, the Iśā, proclaims this truth in its very first verse: *Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat*— 'This whole universe of change is interpenetrated by God'. When man realizes this truth, or progresses towards its realization, he or she expands spiritually beyond the tiny ego or self; by that spiritual growth, one rises from knowledge to wisdom, the impact of which on all inter-human relationships is wholesome, making for fearlessness, for equality of vision or *samadarśittvam,* for harmony, for peace, for life fulfilment. That is the importance of this philosophic vision for human life. Today, *the challenges of human life must be met by the challenge of this unifying philosophy.* 'When one sees all beings in the Ātman and the same Ātman in all beings, such a one cannot hate anyone', proclaims the *Īśā Upaniṣad* (verse 6). How can war and violence, crime and delinquency, which are the pressing problems of modern society, and which arise from the delusive idea of separateness and from a fragmented knowledge and segmental views of life, be overcome except by this deeper unifying vision that comes from seeing the one behind the many? So far as the physical world is concerned, modern physical science gives us that unifying vision. So far as the inner world is concerned, the science of religion gives us that unifying vision. Combining these two in a higher vision of *tattvam,* Vedānta philosophy gives us the deeper vision, or *saṁyak-jñāna,* of total unity.

13. *Conclusion*

I do hope that the deliberations of this symposium, at which so many distinguished thinkers and scientists are going to share their knowledge and experience with us, will mark a milestone in modern India's development of knowledge to wisdom for the good of man—here, there, and everywhere. Our country has been, even according to many contemporary foreign visitors, the home of knowledge and wisdom for ages. But during the last few centuries, we neglected the search of knowledge and the cultivation of wisdom, allowed ignorance and superstition, passion and fear, to overcome our minds and hearts, and invited many miseries and misfortunes to afflict our nation.

Today, slowly, knowledge is coming from the West—knowledge of what the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.4) calls *aparā-vidyā* type—knowledge of physical sciences, economics, politics, and all other types of positivistic knowledge; along with this, there is a revival of interest among our people in our own tested inheritance of spiritual knowledge and wisdom—the ancient *parā vidyā*. Let us work hard to make India the centre of all knowledge, both *aparā* and *parā*, the physical sciences and the science of spirituality. That is a worthy national aim for all of us here in India, and for all others elsewhere.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND OUR NATIONAL PROBLEMS *

1. *Introduction*

I AM very thankful to the Rotary Conference, especially to Rotary Governor H. K. Das of Ambala, who is a very close and dear friend of mine, for inviting me to come and address this conference this morning. I have come all the way from Calcutta in response to his invitation. I have addressed several Rotary meetings before, and what induces me to do so is the presence of a small group of people in all these Rotary Clubs who are closely known to me and whose character I respect.

2. *Our Post-Independence Human Situation*

On an occasion like this when you are holding your District Rotary Conference and our nation is confronted with various problems, I can do no better than utilize the brief time that is allotted to me to discuss with you these problems and suggest solutions for them as best as I can. None can live in India today without being conscious that our nation is passing through hard times. But it is our responsibility and privilege as citizens of India to face the challenge of these problems, understand the forces that are acting upon our society, and tackle them in the most consummate manner possible. If problems thwart us and frighten us, it will be a very poor expression of the freedom for which we struggled and which has come to us. Fifty or sixty years ago, the country was entirely different; the people of India then were entirely different in their mental make-up, aspirations, and ideas. But today you find a thorough change, and this change is particularly evident in our youths; there is in them a greater sense of self-confidence, energy, vitality, and intelligence than in those of the pre-independence generation. People were generally 'manageable' by themselves and by others up to about two decades ago. But since independence, there has been a release of vast energies in our youths which, when expressed in organized movements, appear like the elemental forces of earthquakes and floods. This new human energy is spilling over and creating confusion and destruction all round; and the nation is baffled to witness this phenomenon. I would invite you to place this phenomenon in a certain historical context and view it in the light of the refreshing and strengthening philosophy that was given to us by one of our greatest architects of modern India, namely, Swami Vivekananda.

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* 'Inspirational Address' at the District Rotary Conference held at the Mavalankar Hall, New Delhi, on 7 January 1968

3. *Vivekananda's Diagnosis of Indian Humanity*

When Swami Vivekananda was returning to India after his successful work of four years in the West, a foreign lady who was his fellow-traveller in the same ship told him: 'Swamiji, your country is very moral'. Swamiji asked her why she felt so. She replied: 'We don't hear much of crime in India; whereas in countries like America and England, we read of so much of crime in the newspapers'. Swamiji heaved a little at this and said: '*I wish it were otherwise!* I wish there was a little more crime in India. There is no life in the people so that they cannot even commit a crime!'

This was the reaction of this great teacher to the India of his time. But if he were to visit his India today, he would be happy to see the energy and vitality of our younger generation. The people of India today, both young and old, are showing their vitality by violent agitations and committing of crimes. In the eyes of Vivekananda, the troubles that we experience in India today will appear quite different from what they appear to many of us. He saw India as a nation that had been immobilized for centuries, whose people had become stagnant, with stereotyped conduct and behaviour, and without a sense of freedom and the sense of the dignity of man; and he strove to awaken that India to the realities and opportunities of the modern age. What appeared to many of his countrymen as morality and goodness appeared to him as fixed and static grooves of life and conduct and mental weakness; originality, creativity, and inventiveness had all but been crushed; much of our religion appeared to him as *piety-fringed worldliness.* Characterizing the centuries-long stagnation of the nation in the terminology of the Sanskrit language, he said that it was the sign of *tamas,* inertia, and not of *sattwa,* equilibrium and calmness. Whereas the calmness of *tamas* is the product of laziness and sheer sleepiness of the soul, the calmness of *sattwa* is the product of high energy resources held in dynamic balance. And none can rise from *tamas* to *sattwa* except through *rajas,* wakeful energy. *Tamas,* therefore, needs to be changed into *rajas* first, before raising it to the high level of *sattwa.*

This is the way of character development for a man or for a nation, said Swami Vivekananda. He wanted to see the sleeping people of his country rousing themselves from their *tamas* of inertia and laziness and, achieving the energy of *rajas,* the energy of action and movement, then raise the same increasingly, through self-discipline, to a higher level where it comes under the control of *sattwa,* so that the tremendous mass of energy resources may express itself as character-efficiency, as the capacity for calm, silent, creative work in cooperation with one's fellowmen. This is the real manliness of man and womanliness of woman. But what can discipline do where there is no energy to discipline? What can a dam achieve when there is no flow in the river?

Therefore the first step for the nation is to acquire energy. And the nation is achieving it in its post-independence generation. The nation was getting trained in it during its decades of struggle for political freedom and social justice. This brought us political independence. In its wake has come a measure of self-confidence and hope. These are releasing vast energies in increasing numbers and sections and groups of our people who were, for long, passive witnesses of the national life and not its active participants. India today is a free state; it allows perfect freedom of thought and expression to every one of its citizens. It provides opportunities for our people to express their inborn talents. None is barred from rising to any position in life, the only limitation being the available resources of the nation and its character-efficiency.

So, this enormous freedom that environs us today gives our people—long enslaved and suppressed and stagnant—the opportunity to express themselves. And at the level of *rajas,* such expression becomes unbridled exuberance; and if still under the control of *tamas,* violent and destructive as well; this represents human energy before it achieves self-discipline and comes under the control of *sattwa*. When human energy rises to the level of *rajas* from *tamas*, it becomes as much a problem as an achievement, it becomes as much a challenge as a victory. And if the challenge is not met, the victory achieved may turn into defeat. But the victory itself is a real victory. If Vivekananda were to come to India and see this phenomenon that we have around us, he would be immensely happy. He would say: The first stage of the education of my people is taking place now. It has advanced far. But he would point out to us that this first stage must be followed by the subsequent stages of that education for man-making which he had proclaimed as the very basis of nation-building.

4. *Our Post-Independence Generation*

When we see thousands of our youths in one of their processions in our streets, the impression that we get is that of some elemental force in action, like the force that we witnessed recently in the Koyna earthquake or that finds expression in the devastating floods or other natural catastrophes that we have often experienced in our country. Similarly, some elemental force is moving the hearts of our men and women today. Never again shall we see the timid, submissive type of humanity that we had all these centuries. This is the greatest asset for a nation such as ours which has been long suppressed, which had been like wax to be moulded by other forces, which had consequently lost the sense of human dignity and worth all these centuries. Today, we see in our new generation of the post-independence period a spirit of freedom; a sense of energy and vitality, keen intelligence, and a measure of fearlessness which even grown-ups could not experience fifty years ago. *This is a sure sign of national growth and development.* No nation can rise to high moral stature from a state of sleepy inertia and tame submissiveness without passing through this experience of exuberant self-expression, often accompanied, may be, by undesirable exaggerations. We cannot escape or skip over this accompaniment of the growing adolescence of a people.

But, as I said before, this first step must be followed by further steps; adolescence should only be a stage on the way to the maturity of adult womanhood or manhood; it should not be treated as the final goal to be settled in. *And this is the challenge before our nation* *today*. We should not expect that our children will be quiet, submissive, and manageable as before. That was the prayer from the hearts of many a parent in India throughout these centuries. How many of our parents have been desiring that their children should be tame, that they should render unquestioned obedience, and that they should not strive to be anything more than the replica of their parents! Our people sought for this type of tame, submissive, manageable humanity not only in their children, but also in their wives and in their workers and assistants. That was the way of the feudal world and the medieval age with their sets of values. The nation is being forced to leave that behind and enter the modern world and the modern age with its dynamic forces and democratic urges, where man is on the march to an inarticulate and indistinct goal, the goal of self-expression and self-fulfilment.

Today, our people can learn the lesson that it is a privilege to have free-minded, energetic, vital children. Similarly, it is a privilege and opportunity to have free-minded, fearless, and intelligent colleagues in offices, and intelligent, self-respecting and energetic workers in our fields and factories. And we shall feel the joy of living with them and working with them, only when we develop in ourselves new energy resources and the technique of managing them. This is intellectual and ethical discipline resulting in character-efficiency centred in a socially oriented will which, in turn, will enable us to manage the new energies flowing through the people around us—young and old—and turn them in the direction of the good of all, the welfare of all. *This is the line of growth and development of man in India, as visualized by Vivekananda.* And freedom is the only environment in which this kind of growth and development can be achieved. This is the purpose of the freedom of thought and action granted and guaranteed by our Constitution and zealously upheld by our State.

5. *Vivekananda's Call to March On*

Thus, the next stage of development for our people is to catch hold of this enormous elemental energy that is manifesting in our youth and give it a creative direction. The only problem today is this problem of *direction*. Energy has come; but it has found no direction. Energy without direction becomes largely self-cancelling and self-destructive. And human energy gets direction from human thought—dispassionate, critical, and creative. And it is this guidance from thought that we have been missing in India these two decades. The result is what we see around us—vast energies spilling over and exhausting themselves in self-destructive ways in our youths, in our grown-ups, in our press, in our legislatures, in our industrial undertakings, and in our schools and colleges. While we admire the energy manifested, we cannot but deplore the utter **waste of that energy in self-cancelling ways, through our incapacity** to discipline it and give it a healthy direction.

This is the great challenge before us today: the harnessing and disciplining of this enormous fund of human energy resources which is coursing through every section of our people, and directing it to man-making and nation-building channels. *And this will be the test of our nation's wisdom.* That calls for a type of leadership which is not afraid of problems, which has tapped new energy resources within itself through patriotic involvement, and which has established a measure of discipline and integrity within itself. Such leadership is needed not only in politics and administration, but also in education, industry, and other vital departments of national life. It is such enlightened and disciplined leadership that can lead the nation from the valley of despair and frustration to the summit of hope and achievement. With such energy resources in our people, and guided by such leadership, our nation can achieve a greatness and strength unparalleled in its five-thousand-year history.

6. *Vivekananda's Message of Manliness*

Vivekananda therefore spoke only about man-making education and man-making religion. He was not concerned with the **creedal religions which more often have disrupted than united the** nation. He did not care whether one belonged to the Hindu religion or the Muslim religion or the Christian religion. He was in search of men endowed with strength of character, the spirit of freedom, and social feeling. He wanted our people to learn to stand on their own feet and to help others to stand on their own feet. Writing to Sister Nivedita on 7 June 1896, from London, he said (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, 1960 Edition, p. 352):

'Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is

> character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.'

When I was in Indonesia in 1964 in connection with the Vivekananda Centenary Celebrations in that country, a book on Vivekananda in Indonesian and English, entitled *Suara Vivekananda* or Voice of Vivekananda, was released by President Soekarno; he had contributed an introduction to the book in which he had quoted the following words of Vivekananda who, he wrote, had inspired him to dedicate himself to the service of his nation:

> 'Swami Vivekananda! What a name! ... He it was who said: "We have wept long enough. No more weeping now; but stand on your feet and be men." '

These words of Vivekananda will inspire us today with a new courage and resolve. We have certainly wept long; but this is not the time to weep, but to gird up our loins and manfully face the problems released by the political independence of our long-submerged nation. He gave us a robust philosophy of faith and hope—faith in man, in oneself and in others—by which we can transform ourselves into efficient agencies for tackling these enormous energies that are finding manifestation in our otherwise mild and submissive people; these energies, left to themselves, can destroy a society; if properly tackled and directed, on the other hand, they can lift that society to all-round happiness and welfare within, and to a wholesome impact on the rest of the world outside.

That is the challenge and opportunity before us. We need numbers of educated and disciplined men and women with this faith and courage and resolve, and with this national vision; they will provide intelligent and effective leadership capable of tackling the national problems. And when I speak of leadership in this context, I do not mean just politicians or administrators; every department of national endeavour, from the Union Government down to the village level, calls for the services of such leaders of energy and vision. They are needed in the fields of production and distribution, education and social welfare, journalism and the arts, politics and administration. The production of such leadership is the test of a dynamic democratic social order. In fact, every citizen, including the simple housewife, is called upon to play this part in small or large community situations.

Such leadership is not something thrust upon a person; nor is it something grabbed by one by clever manipulations. It is the product of the growth of personality through correct education which, as Vivekananda defined it, is the *assimilation of ideas;* it is the *training of the mind* and not the *stuffing of the brain*. We then learn to view our little personal aspirations and urges in the context of the larger national aspirations and urges and the mounting national problems. When one does this, one ceases to be a mere *individual;* he becomes a *person* through this conscious social participation. He or she becomes a part of the national current of life. This is the transformation which education achieves in the citizen; a static individual seeking his own little satisfactions, working out his own little problems, grows into a socially sensitive person, sometimes of gigantic personality proportions, whose life and destiny become intertwined with the life and destiny of his people. This was the make-up of the personality of one like Mahatma Gandhi. *This is the spiritual growth of man;* and *this growth must come to us today in small or large measures.*

7. *The Problem of Human Growth*

I have used the word growth. That is the correct word to use in this context. In India, we have been taught by our Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* to approach the subject of religion, the subject of ethics, the subject of morality, in the context of human growth. But we have failed in recent centuries to view human life and destiny in this context of growth; we increasingly sank into a static complaisance; we preferred quantity to quality as the criterion of human existence. The result has been a large and ever-increasing population physically and mentally of dwarfish proportions, who were incapable of visualizing or anticipating national problems or solving them. That is the way not of life but of death for a man or for a nation. 'All expansion is life, all contraction is death', says Swami Vivekananda. Today, when we seek life and more life for us as individuals and as a nation, we need to understand once again this perennial message of human growth and development, of the growth and expansion of the human personality.

We grow physically; we also grow mentally; and there is a third growth, namely, the *spiritual growth of man*. Physical growth is obvious to us; a baby at birth is 6 or 7 lbs. in weight. Every day it increases in weight through the physical nourishment it gets from its mother's milk to begin with, and from other heavier foods later. And by the time it is 25 or 30 years old, he or she is 60 or 80 kgs. in weight; a tremendous growth has taken place, visible and palpable, the laws and techniques of which we have slowly mastered through the millennia of human history; it centres round three words: *food, digestion*, and *assimilation*.

The second type of growth is what we know as mental growth; this is less obvious, but not less true. A village child, ignorant and timid, and without any confidence in himself or herself, is sent to school; and within a few months, he or she gathers some knowledge and develops a sense of self-confidence; the child has grown in a new dimension; it has commenced its mental growth which, in a few years, may transform it into an intellectual giant.

These are two types of growth which we know and which we try to ensure in ourselves and in our children. We had neglected both for centuries, the second more than the first, and we are now engaged in a mighty effort to provide increasing facilities for human growth in these two fields, namely, physical and mental, through stress on scientific nutrition and education. *These two measures are basic for our democracy, for its health and strength.* It is impossible for a democratic nation to be ignorant and to be free, as remarked by Jefferson. The strength of a nation lies in its citizens, physically healthy and mentally well-instructed, alert, and confident. Our nation today is energetically engaged in ensuring this two-fold growth of man in India by providing appropriate physical and mental nourishments.

8. *Evolution: Organic versus Spiritual*

But our great teachers have always told us that man's growth should be total and not piecemeal. If any aspect is neglected, there is imbalance in the personality. It is like a person who has a brilliant intellect, but whose body is weak through neglect of diet and exercise. What we want is the total development of personality. If we seek this all-round development of man, something more is necessary than the two growths above mentioned, namely, physical and intellectual. *There is need for growth in a third dimension, less* *obvious than the other two, but more vital, and this is the growth in the spiritual dimension.* Ethical sense, moral awareness, artistic sensibilities, and every type of striving after perfection, all proceed from this growth of man in the spiritual dimension. *All true character-efficiency is the product of this spiritual growth.* This marks the distinctively human phase of evolution, says twentieth-century biology. In the words of Julian Huxley uttered in the course of his lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision' (*Evolution After Darwin,* Vol. III, p. 251):

> 'Man's evolution is not biological but psycho-social; it operates by the mechanism of cultural tradition, which involves the cumulative self-reproduction and self-variation of mental activities and their products. Accordingly, major steps in the human phase of evolution are achieved by breakthroughs to new dominant patterns of mental organization of knowledge, ideas, and beliefs—ideological instead of physiological or biological organization.'

Presenting, in the light of the revolutionary advances of twentieth-century biology, the aim of human evolution as "greater fulfilment', Huxley says (*ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 20):

> 'In the light of our present knowledge, man's most comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of organization, or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment—the fuller realization of more possibilities by the human species collectively and more of its component members individually.'

And pointing out, in that lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision', the emergence of *quality* as the criterion of evolution at the human stage in place of *quantity* which dominated the organic or pre-human phase of evolution, Huxley proclaims (*ibid.,* Vol. III, pp. 257-59):

> 'I spoke of quality. This must be the dominant concept of our new belief-system—quality and richness as against quantity and uniformity. ...
>
> 'Once we truly believe ... that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or TV sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary, but bad. Quantity of material production is a means to a further end, and not an end in itself.'

Ultimately, it is this psycho-social growth of man, in which his psyche or self breaks the prison of his physical and organic urges and limitations and reaches out to its oneness with other psyches in society, that constitutes evolution at the human stage. This is the achievement of morality and ethical sense and social feeling *which registers the beginnings of man's spiritual growth.* That growth takes the form of renunciation of the limited, organic, lower self and manifestation of the infinite, higher, spiritual self of man through identification with, and service of, other selves in society. 'Renunciation and service are the twin ideals of India; intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself', says Swami Vivekananda. *They constitute the nourishment for the spiritual growth of man.*

9. *Morality: Static versus Dynamic*

The subject of morality has been long misunderstood by many of our people as consisting merely of a few do's and don'ts, mostly don'ts. Our character became a bundle of don'ts relating to food, drink, and social behaviour. Morality was identified with punctilious observance of a few don'ts such as I don't eat this or that, I don't drink this or that, I don't tell lies, I don't harm any one; character became a bundle of such negations. We failed to realize that character-development is measured more by what we do and the attitude behind such doing than by what we do not do. That you don't hate any one is not so important as that you love some one. Tables and walls and chairs also do not hate; they do no wrong; but they remain tables and walls and chairs. But man can love, he can hate, he can blunder, he can sacrifice himself for a worthy cause, he is restless with new aspirations and urges, he surpasses what he achieves, and, through all these, he expresses the dynamism of his inner life.

When this sets in, man will learn to treat his fellowmen, in the words of the German philosopher Kant, defining the nature of the ethical attitude, as ends in themselves, and not always as means. Man lives in three environments, namely, the natural and the social outside, and the spiritual within. His outside environment comprises *natural objects* consisting of tables and chairs, houses and other possessions, rivers and forests, and the starry heavens, etc. and *social objects* consisting of other human beings. He treats the former entirely as *means* to the satisfaction of his appetites and desires. But when he extends the same treatment to the latter also, namely, social objects, he commits a serious ethical blunder; for he fails to recognize that these social objects have, unlike the natural objects, *ends of their own,* and cannot therefore be treated entirely as means. Such treatment is what we call exploitation and is entirely unethical. As he sees a subject in himself and treats himself as an end accordingly, ethical awareness educates him to treat other human beings as subjects and ends in themselves. Ethical awareness, therefore, is *the recognition of a subject in a social object.* It is this that stirs the stagnant waters of man's inner life and makes it morally dynamic.

It was this dynamism of the inner life that we missed all these centuries, resulting in all-round stagnation. That stagnation is passing now; man in India is on the march; and this march, carried into the inner life, is what results in spiritual growth and moral strength. When this dynamic inner march begins, man learns to treat his body as a servant and not as a master. Till then the body was the prison of the soul, it was its tomb. Now it becomes what it is meant to be, a good instrument in his march to character and life fulfilment, not only for himself, but also for his fellowmen in society. The body becomes like the house we live in. If we are not free to come out of it, it becomes a prison to us; for that is the definition of a prison. A prison is a house into which one is not free to go in and from which one is not free to come out. If a house permits freedom, it ceases to be a prison. Slavery or attachment to the body and its demands makes man a prisoner in his body. He was not free when he got into it. But having got into it, he is free to assert his spiritual freedom; and that is the best use he can make of his body, says the spiritual wisdom of humanity. It is by breaking this attachment that he grows spiritually and achieves spiritual freedom and the capacity to dig his affections in the hearts of others, the capacity to go out of, and return to, his body freely with a view to identifying himself with millions of other bodies and their residents, with their pains and pleasures, urges and aspirations. The psycho-physical energy system of man should not be allowed to become a stagnant pool, but a running stream of energy, entering, and being entered into by, other similar streams of psycho-physical energy systems of society.

It is in this context of social inter-action, that man develops character and achieves his spiritual growth. Modern biology defines society as an inter-thinking group: it is also an inter-feeling group. Animals have feelings and emotions like man; but they are fully under the control of their emotions; but man, even the most primitive man, learnt to interpose thought or reason between the stimulus-response mechanism of the nervous system and thus to gain increasing control over his emotions and feelings, the first step in gaining self-knowledge, according to twentieth-century biology. *And the dominance of man over the rest of creation has come about from this self-knowledge, arising from his inter-thinking capacity getting superposed on the given inter-feeling process.* This results in the growth of his social personality through ethical awareness and self-discipline, over and above his given organic individuality. This is the characteristic of man's spiritual growth.

10. *Man versus His Environment*

Since our independence, our nation has registered its growth in various fields—economic, social, and political. Our industrial growth is impressive; and behind it, and meant to sustain it, has grown a chain of national science laboratories and research institutions. Our free Constitution, and the several general elections held under it, have shattered the political apathy of our common people and given them, in twenty years, a political education which they did not get in the five thousand years of their history. Industrialization has disturbed the centuries-old sleepiness of our social *milieu* and made for social mobility and change, which are the essential prerequisites for human growth. This, aided by our educational expansion, has similarly awakened masses of our humanity to an awareness of the forces shaping the modern world and to a measure of faith and confidence in themselves. All these have made them forsake their age-old role of *creatures* of history and planted in them the urges to be *creators* of history.

These are impressive gains; they tell us in unmistakable accents that our people have, in the language of our spiritual tradition as referred to earlier, risen from their erstwhile *tāmasic* state to the higher *rājasic* stage of social evolution. But we should realize that these are essentially environmental gains only. If they are not accompanied by a corresponding strengthening and enrichment within the organism itself, within the world of man's inner life, that inner world will be eventually invaded by the external environment and reduced to the status of an extension of itself. This results in the mechanization of man, in the warping of his spirit, and, eventually, in his spiritual death. This is the predicament of man in the West, which its thinkers are taking steps to solve by proclaiming once again, what has been always upheld by the world's religions, the truth of the supremacy of the human spirit. In the protesting words of Bertrand Russell (*Impact of Science on Society,* p. 77):

> "The machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan and its worship is the modern diabolism. ... Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.'

11. *Spirituality and Human Fulfilment*

And so, along with the industrial and economic growth of our nation, we have to take steps to ensure also the spiritual growth of our people, *so that man in India may be saved from becoming a mere function or outpost of his external environment,* so that he may be made to realize his spiritual integrity, and made capable, in that strength of inner enrichment, to control and manipulate that dynamic external environment to ensure his own total fulfilment, individual and collective.

This proclaims the importance of that third growth of man mentioned earlier, namely, his spiritual growth, over and above his physical and intellectual growths. Neglect of this third growth is confronting the modern age with the problems of mental giants *versus* moral pigmies; physical vigour *versus* spiritual inanition; external enrichment *versus* inner impoverishment. As he solves the difficult problems of his outer life, his inner life raises more intractable problems. As poignantly expressed by Schopenhauer (*The World as Will and Idea,* Vol. I, p. 404):

> 'All men who are secure from want and care, now that, at last, they have thrown off all other burdens, become a burden to themselves.'

Today, in most technically advanced countries, man's only problem is himself. He feels inwardly insecure in a social context which has achieved for him social security through his own physical and mental labours. *The modern world is in search of that knowledge and technique which can confer on man inner peace and security and the sense of fulfilment.* This is the science of spirituality which India has in her Vedānta; it proclaims spiritual truths which are impersonal, rational, and verifiable, and therefore universal. And it will help the great world religions to release, out of their incrustations of dogmas and creeds, this great science of sciences, namely, spirituality, as the *Gītā* puts it (X.32): *adhyātma vidyā vidyānām,* and provide spiritual nourishment to modern man who is in earnest search of it.

The people of India have this vital nourishment available to them in their own authentic spiritual tradition, a tradition which derives its strength and cogency from being tested and amplified by generations of spiritual seekers and teachers, including Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in our own time. It has nothing to do with any magic or superstition which our people, especially our educated people, often run after in the name of religion. *The sooner our people banish the association of magic with religion, the better for them and for their religion.* A magic fruit cannot satisfy our hunger, only a real fruit can do so. Magic and mummeries cannot strengthen man and give him a sense of fulfilment. It is only the science of spirituality that can do this by revealing to him, and making him realize, the infinite divine dimension of his personality. The Upaniṣads present spirituality as the birthright of every one, and warn man that he neglects this birthright at his peril. *Atmanā vindate vīryam*—'Through the (realization of the) Ātman, his true Self, man achieves great energy', says the *Kena Upaniṣad* and adds: *Iha ced avedīt atha satyamasti; na cedihāvedīt mahatī vinaṣṭiḥ*—'If one realizes It here (in this life), then is there true life for him; (but) if he fails to realize It, great shall be his loss.'

12. *Our Current Spiritual Malnutrition*

The bitter lesson of the neglect of this vital science of spirituality is writ large in post-independent India in the moral decline of our people. The strength to resist temptations to indulge in anti-social practices is not a physical strength or an intellectual strength arising from man's physical growth or mental growth. Men and women well endowed with growth in these two dimensions have, alas!, shown themselves incapable of resisting even ordinary temptations, what to speak of big ones. They do not show the presence in them of that strength which helps man to resist and overcome impulses to selfishness, greed, anger, jealousy, meanness, and pettiness; for *that strength is the moral strength arising from the spiritual nourishment of man.* This proclaims the primacy of the spiritual growth of man over his every other growth, the very sustenance of which depends upon that spiritual growth.

The moral maladies of our nation manifesting as gross selfishness, uninhibited dishonesty, exploitation, bribery, corruption, malpractices of all sorts in politics, industry and business, petty thefts, by students, of each other's books and goods in our schools and colleges, and, above all, the erosion of mutual trust and confidence even in the pledged word, reveal only the enormous extent of the spiritual malnutrition of our people. The English poet Goldsmith warned:

> Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

Our masses had never decayed in their age-long poverty to the same extent as our classes have decayed in their wealth during this brief post-independence period. And today the decay of our classes is filtering down to our masses as well. Shall we allow our nation to grow into an industrial and economic giant but remain a moral pigmy, with millions steeped in poverty and squalor in between? So far this has been the trend; and we are reaping the poisonous fruits of that trend in the prevailing sense of fear as to the unity and integrity of our beloved nation, and the sense of despair as to the future of our new-won freedom. This fear and despair have recently evoked a mood of thinking and self-criticism in our people and a desire to reverse this downward trend. After independence, our nation had said good-bye to thought in favour of a care-free 'honeymoon' attitude and its ways which, even in marriage, are disastrous if continued too long, with hard work and earning neglected. By this we only succeeded in frittering away not only our accumulated sterling balances but also our accumulated moral assets. We failed to realize the truth of the dictum that eternal vigilance is the prize of liberty and the guarantee of culture and civilization. The new self-assessment and questioning as to whither the nation is going is the only silver lining to the otherwise sombre clouds filling the Indian sky. *This mood and temper, with fearless, critical, thought to sustain it, have to be nourished and strengthened in a pervasive way so as to release a new wave of confidence and self-reliance within the nation.*

13. *Need for Creative Thinking*

Thought is the driving force behind all development and expansion of culture. Behind the world-wide impact of modern Western culture lies its scientific and socio-political thought. Devotion to the pursuit of truth in nature and in life, backed by the intellectual discipline of critical inquiry, detachment, and objectivity, and yoked to the discipline of precision in thought and speech, constitutes the power of thought in science. That root power of pure science, finding expression, in quick succession, in the bumper fruits of technological inventions and discoveries of applied science, has had an explosive impact, world-wide in its scope, as much on man's thinking as on his ways of living. Long before India became free, her great teacher and awakener, Vivekananda, had welcomed these deliverances of modern science and summoned his countrymen to *assimilate* its spirit and modernize their country with its creative strength, and not rest content with slavish *imitation* of the Western ways of living. But since our independence, our people were more after the *fruits* of modern science than after its *roots*. They were more eager to enjoy the amenities of modern civilization *second-hand,* by buying or borrowing or getting gifted its dazzling fruits, than by planting its roots in India by the assimilation of the scientific spirit and temper and critical approach, and helping to produce its bumper fruits *first-hand* within the nation. We failed to realize with sufficient clarity and emotional involvement the greatness of India's scientific past and the need to make her once more the home of original science in the modern age.

14. *The Primacy of Man*

Whether it is science or education, politics or money-making, or even religion itself, in every field of national endeavour, we failed to capture the heroic attitude which welcomes struggle and hardship and scorns charity and gifts, but favoured cheap easy-going ways and methods, resulting in an all-round lowering of standards and efficiency. We thus devalued man long before we were compelled, by overwhelming national and international forces, to devalue our rupee. All these will be great national gain, however, if they have now led us to realize the primacy of man over his environment, the primacy of his total personality-growth over every other growth such as industrial or commercial, and to realize that the criterion of the utility and worth of the latter lies in the former.

This idea of the primacy of man, his all-round growth, development, and fulfilment is what we need to grasp and inspire ourselves with today. Our people bear the impress of arrested growth, partly through centuries of external invasions and oppressions, but largely through our own internal weaknesses—weaknesses arising from partial or inadequate philosophies, and wrong and often pernicious inter-personal attitudes and relationships. Self-centredness and selfishness became raised to a philosophy—the philosophy of worldliness. We converted India into a land of a few real saints and millions of worldly people; this was the result, as Vivekananda has shown, of our people being provided with only one far-away saintly ideal—the ideal of ***mokṣa*** or *mukti,* with no nearby *attainable* ideals intervening. This resulted in the spiritual malnutrition of the masses of our people and in the cheapening of religion into a static piety, into a form of *piety-fringed worldliness*. Much of our laziness and inertia, our selfishness and self-centredness, our involved and often crooked thinking, our want of character-efficiency and genuine concern for the other **man,** can be traced to this *indigestion* of the high saintly ideal of *mukti* which our religion had wrongly placed before one and all, against the clear teaching of the *Gītā* that the path of action in the service of society leading to strength and character-efficiency is the correct and proper way to the attainment of high spirituality (III. 4):

Na Karmaṇām anārambhāt ***naiṣkarmyaṁ*** *puruṣośnute;*
Na ca sannyasanāt eva siddhiṁ samadhigacchati—

'Not by non-performance of actions does man reach (true) actionlessness; by mere renunciation (of action) man does not attain spiritual perfection.'

We clean forgot that true saintliness can be achieved only by passing through the discipline of manliness, which involves the discipline and control of the lower self of man, centred in his physical and sensate nature, with a view to manifesting his higher self through the cultivation of ethical awareness and social feeling in the context of life and action. This registers the beginnings of the *growth* of the worldly man into the spiritual man, the launching of him into the stream of 'saint-in-the-making', into the stream of what Julian Huxley refers to as psycho-social evolution. This is *Yoga,* spirituality, which the *Gītā* defines as *karmasu kauśalam*—'efficiency in action'.

15. *The Householder to Grow into the Citizen*

Indian sociology gives a high place of honour to the *gṛhastha* or householder. By his intelligent hard **work,** he sustains the whole society of which he is the only producer; the other three *āśramās* or orders, namely, the *brahmachārin,* the student, the *vānaprasthin,* the ascetic, and the *sannyāsin,* the monk, besides the physically and mentally handicapped sections of the society—all depend upon him. Our great social philosopher, Manu, therefore, speaks of the *gṛhastha āśramā* as the 'pre-eminent *āśramā*', and the *gṛhastha* as the 'pre-eminent' among members of all the four *āśramās* (*Manu-Smṛti,* III, 78):

Yasmāt trayo'pyāśramiṇo jńānenānnena cānvaham;
Grhasthenaiva dhāryante tasmāt jyeṣṭhāśramī gṛhī—

'Because (all) the members of the three (other) *āśramās* are always sustained through knowledge and food by the *gṛhastha,* therefore, the *gṛahastha's* is the *jyeṣṭhāśramā,* the pre-eminent *āśramā.*'

This high *gṛhastha* ideal became watered down to the level of a self-sufficient worldliness when, in recent centuries, we subordinated it to another concept, namely, the *saṁsāri,* the worldly man. And when ethical values and the welfare of society claimed the sacrifices and services of our people, they failed to respond by saying that they were after all *saṁsāris* and not saints. *Modern India is engaged in correcting this wrong and pernicious notion that man is to be grovelling in worldliness if he is not able to rise to the heights of saintliness.* This wrong philosophy has deprived millions of our people of the opportunity of achieving *attainable* levels of human excellence, and realizing the true dignity and worth of man. It prevented them from *growing* spiritually, from evolving psycho-socially and morally, **and** made them content with a static *piety-fringed worldliness.*

Modern India summons our people to discard that wrong philosophy and apply the corrective, by the *gṛhastha* or householder *growing* into the citizen. This is his or her psycho-social growth and development. The psyche or soul, centred in, and limited by, a small biological group which is the family, breaks that limitation and expands into a social personality through conscious social participation. This is the modern concept of citizenship with its twin constituents, namely, the political and the ethical. The merely political constituent relates man to membership *in* a free community; the ethical **constituent** relates him to membership *of* the same free community. It is the latter constituent that registers his psycho-social growth. The true citizen is thus defined as the *free* and *responsible* member of a free community. *Freedom and responsibility are spiritual values which are the by-products of the spiritual growth of man.* They do not come out of the external environment; they proceed from the inner spiritual depths of man's life by suitable manipulations of that external environment, natural and social, through technical and socio-political processes. As these values manifest in man, they in turn help to raise the tone of his social environment.

This interaction between man and his social environment is what is sought to be controlled and directed by the forces of ethics and politics. Where these two forces work together, there is true citizenship and general human welfare. Where, however, the ethical constituent is neglected, we get the worldly citizen or the *citizen-fringed* worldliness of politics, like the *piety-fringed* worldliness of religion. This is, unfortunately, the type of citizen that we have been turning out since independence. We have yet to realize the importance of the *spiritual growth of man* into the citizen. We were satisfied if he grew into it physically and intellectually. Every new-born generation stands in a queue, and as soon as he or she attains the age of twenty-one, he or she automatically becomes a citizen of India's sovereign democratic republic. He or she may not have captured the spirit of freedom in himself or herself, and the sense of self-discipline it involves and the sense of national responsibility it gives birth to. *We can trace many of our contemporary national ills to this cheap and easy concept of citizenship.*

16. *Man: Mature versus Immature*

In such citizenship, where freedom is not sustained by the ethical sense of national responsibility, there reigns the irresponsibility of self-seeking worldliness, where the individual seeks every opportunity to exploit the state and society for purposes of his or her own family or group. In his or her hands, social justice, which is the mainstay of a free state or society, becomes constantly imperilled. This is the source of all the nepotism that is plaguing our nation today, and the cause, too, of much of the social agitations and explosions arising from the grievances of those who feel that their claims have been unjustly passed over, whether in the field of appointments or promotions, of licences or permits, of admissions or scholarships.

It is this sense of national responsibility that marks man's rise in moral stature and maturity. Where it is lacking, there is dwarfishness and immaturity. Swami Vivekananda, in one of his Indian lectures, calls such people 'moustached babies'; their physical growth and maturity have not been accompanied by mental and moral maturity. We have produced masses of such 'moustached babies' in India since our independence. They have to be trained to mental and moral maturity. This can be done if a higher concept of human excellence is presented to the nation than that of selfishness and exploitation. This is contained in the message of *renunciation and service* which Vivekananda has imparted to modern India.

17. *Spirituality versus Worldliness*

It is renunciation of the lower, biologically-conditioned self, with its constant mood and impulse of self-seeking and exploitation, and manifestation of the higher, spiritually-free Self, with its constant mood and impulse of service. *The liberation of these two values of renunciation and service will galvanize our nation by initiating and sustaining the spiritual growth of our people, to match the growth of the nation in the socio-economic and other external fields.* Every work becomes service when the human motive inspires it and national responsibility sustains it. In its light, no work is high or low. It raises all work to high excellence through raising the spiritual excellence of the worker, be he a shoe-maker or an administrator, an industrialist or a labourer, a farmer or a professor, a prime minister or a simple housewife. Every such work not only adds to the wealth and welfare of society, but also raises the spiritual height of the worker and the moral strength of the nation. Work thus achieves, under this philosophy, this double character-efficiency for man, namely, productive efficiency outside and personality-efficiency within. This is the meaning of the *Gītā's* definition of *Yoga* as *karmasu kauśalam*.

When we combine the *gṛhastha* ideal with the citizenship ideal, we get a new type of human excellence, revealing the *growth* of man in the third, that is, the spiritual dimension. The *gṛhastha* may, and in recent centuries has, often confined his interest and attention to himself and to his small family; but the citizen rises above the limitations of his little household and of his own physical personality, and embraces his society in a sweeping concern of love and service. *Our society needs the ministrations of such people who have assimilated this citizenship ideal in small or large measures.* Millions of our fellow-citizens are crying for light and life; they have been in darkness and have suffered privations for ages. Our political freedom has no meaning unless they get the blessings of a better and a fuller life. And this is the responsibility and privilege of all educated citizens in our democracy today.

When our educated section will realize this truth, when they will *assimilate* the values of freedom, self-discipline, and responsibility, then a welcome change will come over the mind and face of free India. It will bring us strength and character-efficiency and the capacity for team-work. *This is the way to bring our country from the medieval to the modern age, from the feudal to the democratic outlook.* This is true progress; *this is true spirituality as well.* To be *modern* is to assimilate this spirit of progress, with its spirit of equality, freedom, energy, and capacity for team-work, *and not to run after the shallow ways of modernism in food and drink and dress, buttressed by a cheap cosmopolitanism!*

Freedom and responsibility involve, as I said before, self-discipline. It is only slaves that want to dominate and enslave others and that resent discipline; but free men never do either. Our post-independence burst of indiscipline largely reveals only one truth—that our inner life is still afflicted by a disposition resulting from our slavery of centuries. 'So give up being a slave', exhorts Vivekananda in his lecture on 'The Future of India', and asks the nation to recognize the dignity and worth of man in oneself and in others, to serve the nation irrespective of caste or creed or sex, and thus forge a new national character and destiny.

Sri Ramakrishna expresses this new philosophy of the *gṛhastha* growing into the citizen in a few simple illumining words of exhortation to man: Live in *Saṁsāra,* the world; for that is the only venue for life, for all its struggles and achievements; even saints and incarnations of God live in *saṁsāra.* But allow not *saṁsāra,* worldliness, to enter into you, to live in you; for that will turn life into a stagnant pool, swampy and malarious, instead of transforming it into a healthy running stream fertilizing life around. A boat will be on the water; that is the proper place for it; there alone can it express its true function. But water should not be allowed to get into the boat; for that will defeat the purpose for which the boat is meant.

In these few words, Sri Ramakrishna has given us the combined message of social ethics and religion. Living in the world is not the same as being worldly. Worldliness is a spiritual disease; it breeds selfishness, meanness, jealousy, exploitation, proneness to litigation, and other evils, reducing collective human life to elementary proportions. This is our country's dismal experience. When worldliness gets into man, he becomes 'a little clod of ailments and grievances ever complaining that the world does not devote itself to making you happy', as expressed by Bernard Shaw. Life then ceases to be the venue, the *Kurukṣetra,* for the great struggle to continue evolution into the specifically human levels, namely, the psycho-social, moral, and spiritual. India had carried evolution into these higher fields, but only in the life of a small minority; she left her millions, whether rich or poor, learned or ignorant, in the stagnation of *saṁsāra. This is in for a revolutionary change in the modern age.* Vivekananda proclaimed that *the very significance of the modern age in our age-old Indian history lay precisely in this social revolution, in this effort and struggle to awaken our millions to an awareness of their human dignity and worth, and also in the possibility of its success, thanks to the sustenance it can receive today from modern science, technology, and socio-political thought.*

18. *The Indian Rotary : Its National Role*

The current problems of our nation are problems of our nation's socio-political adolescence; they are the magnified version of the psychological problems confronting a child entering the age of thirteen or fourteen, the age of adolescence. Other nations also have passed through this stage in their formative years and experienced these problems, including the mighty United States of today. Many of them are still faced with intractable problems of their own. Let us not, therefore, be baffled by our problems; let us strive to take the nation to the maturity of adulthood by instilling in ourselves and in others the spiritual values of freedom and responsibility. Only by experiencing and handling problems can we eventually overcome them. We cannot start with other nations' finished wisdom; their experience can give us guidance; and often warning also; but it cannot be a substitute for our struggle to gain wisdom ourselves. *We sought for political freedom not only to behave correctly but even to commit blunders and mistakes.* Freedom is no freedom otherwise. When we were in bondage, we rarely committed blunders. The slave and his actions are not subjects of ethical judgment; that is the privilege only of free men and their actions. So let us not be too much baffled by the blunders committed by our nation after it became free. True freedom has in it the power to rescue the nation from its blunders and their effects. And let us pray with poet Tagore in his *Gītāñjali:* 'Into that heaven of freedom, O Father, let my country awake!'

Members of a movement like the Rotary, which consists of thousands of our citizens possessed of the blessings not only of education but also of other good things of life, have the responsibility, opportunity, and privilege before them of educating themselves and their fellow-citizens in the citizenship values of freedom, self-discipline, and responsibility. *This is practical patriotism; it is also practical politics and religion in one.* 'Be and make' shall be our motto, says Swami Vivekananda; be men yourselves and help others to be men. He preached the strengthening, purifying, and unifying message of a man-making education and a man-making religion. Today we have in our youths the manifestation of high emotional energy. It is the raw material of all character; but it is only raw material; it needs processing. This emotional energy, disciplined and controlled by a socially-oriented moral will, and directed to socially useful channels of action, is character-efficiency, says Vivekananda. Where that emotional energy-resource is less, the resulting character will also be of a lower order; where that energy is more, the resulting character will also be of a higher order.

19. *Vivekananda: 'the Harmony of All Human Energy'*

We have today abundant raw material of this emotional energy for producing efficient manhood and womanhood. *The science and technique of processing it into character is what the nation will learn from Vivekananda.* Addressing the Vivekananda Centenary Celebrations in the Ramlila grounds in Delhi five years ago, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru commended to the youth of India the study of Vivekananda literature. He said that if he were to place before them a teacher whose teachings had the power to inspire them to work for the all-round good of the nation, it was Vivekananda. In his *Discovery of India,* Jawaharlal Nehru gives the following tribute to Swamiji (p. 400):

> 'Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems, and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.'

Romain Rolland, in his *Life of Vivekananda,* refers to Vivekananda as the 'personification of the harmony of all human energy'. This capacity to become a harmony of all human energy, and to bridge the gulf between our national past and present must come, in some measure, to every citizen of India. This blessing will come to the nation through the Vivekananda literature available today in eight volumes in English, in ten volumes in Hindi, and similarly in most of our national languages. We have to make this blessing available to our youths, especially the blessing contained in his *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* and *Letters.* Rolland writes thus about this literature in his *Life of Vivekananda* (p. 162):

> '*Vivekananda's words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these utterances of Vivekananda, separated as they are from me in books of thirty years' distance, without getting a thrill through my body as of an electric shock. And what shocks and transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!*'

20. Conclusion

This literature will help to shock us out of our complacencies, lift us out of our self-centred attitudes, and cure us of our mental flabbiness; it brings to us an awareness of our pressing national problems and a keen desire to be instruments of their solution through a sense of national commitment and involvement. And most of our educated people suffer from these maladies and are in need of this remedy.

In this connection I can do no better than share with you a recent experience, highly relevant to the present theme, of one of our sensitive youths. A few months ago, Mrs. Amala Shankar, artist, and wife of the well-known artist, Mr. Uday Shankar, came to me at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta, with her twenty-year-old son, Anand, who is a student of music at *Vāraṇāsi* and who had come to bid me farewell on the eve of his return to *Vāraṇāsi*. I asked him whether he had read Vivekananda; he replied that he had read a small book by name *Thus Spake Vivekananda*. I said that that was just an 'appetiser'. I requested the mother to purchase from the Institute bookstall a copy of Vivekananda's *Lectures from Colombo to Almora*. She bought a copy and I autographed and gave it to Anand saying that he would find it inspiring.

Mother and son took leave and the son left for *Vāraṇāsi* the next day. A few days later, the mother phoned to me in great joy and read out to me the letter just then received from her son from *Vāranāṣi*. He wrote to say that, as the train left Howrah station, he occupied his seat in the compartment and became absorbed in Vivekananda's book. The compartment was full of passengers, many of whom were railway staff. They were talking rot all the time; there was a mood of flimsiness and light-heartedness about them and their talk; and the subjects of the talk were mostly grievances and complaints against the railway administration and abuse of the Government, in which the whole compartment participated. This continued for some time. Then suddenly one of the railway staff, seeing Anand absorbed in a book and not participating in their hilarity, came towards him and asked him in a brusque manner what he was reading, and snatching the book from him, started reading the book himself. Soon the book gripped him and he sat absorbed in its reading. The rest of the passengers continued merrily as before. A little later, this officer looked up and, finding the others still absorbed in their flimsy talk, shouted at them and asked them to shut up and to listen to what Vivekananda had to say; the compartment becoming silent, he read out passage after passage from the Swami's *Lectures from Colombo to Almora,* dealing with the nation's problems of poverty and illiteracy of the mass of the people, the heartlessness and character-deficiency of the upper classes, and how these were to be eradicated and a progressive national life ensured. This, wrote Anand, created a revolutionary transformation in the atmosphere of the compartment and in the subjects of discussion, which continued till the end of the journey. The passengers became aware of the nation's problems and their own national responsibility as citizens; the flimsy, light-hearted mood gave place to a sense of national urgency and personal involvement in it.

Anand was deeply impressed and inspired by this experience and could not find adequate words to convey it to his mother. But he had thus become the nation's instrument to convey the blessings of human excellence imbedded in the Vivekananda literature to a section of India's light-hearted citizens who were asleep to their citizenship privileges and responsibilities.

And millions of our young and old, similarly, are living flimsy lives, ignorant of their nation's struggles, and ignorant, too, of this mine of strength and inspiration lying about them in this great literature, and waiting for the opportunity to be introduced to the same. Whatever may be the position of our nation with respect to food supply and technical know-how—we may have to be at the receiving end for these for some more years to come—we are not lacking in the resources of man-making and nation-building ideas and ideologies. In this field, we are in surplus and in a position to export to other countries, which we are already doing. *In this sphere at least, we are starving in the sight of plenty!* Let us cease to starve spiritually, but strengthen ourselves with the nourishment provided by our rich spiritual and cultural heritage, past and present. Vivekananda brought the message of the Upaniṣads, the message of Vedānta, from the obscurity of books and the close custody of pundits, to the daylight of everyman's everyday life. The central truth of this message is the glory of the human spirit, its infinite powers and possibilities, and the need for its manifestation in life. He expounded Vedānta as the science of human growth, development, and fulfilment, as 'the science of human possibilities', in the words used by Julian Huxley to pinpoint the urgent demand of the modern age.

Human experience tells us that every sinner has a future as every saint had a past. The rowdy youth of today is the disciplined citizen of tomorrow. It is more of education and less of condemnation that we need. And this education is essentially the awakening of the ever-present purity and perfection of the inner man. And it is this awakening that Vivekananda imparts to man in East and West today. And let me conclude with a flash of his inspiration compressed by him in a few words. Speaking on 'The Mission of the Vedānta' at Kumbakonam, Tamilnad, in 1897, in the course of his whirlwind tour of national awakening from Colombo to Almora, he says (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. III, Ninth Edition, p. 193):

> 'Teach yourselves, teach every one, his real nature; call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.'

26

AN INTERVIEW WITH SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

1. A DIALOGUE ON POLITICS

(*An Interview with Swami Ranganathananda* consists of three dialogues: 'A Dialogue on Politics', 'A Dialogue on Science and Religion', and 'A Dialogue on the Meaning of Vedānta', which David Chandler, American film writer and contributor to many national magazines, had with the Swami during David Chandler's third trip to India in 1952 when he wrote educational films for the Government of India under the American assistance program and when he took the opportunity to attend the Swami's weekly Sunday *Gītā* lectures at the New Delhi Ramakrishna Mission, of which he was then the Head, and to interview the Swami.

The interview appeared in *The Vedānta and the West* which was then being published by the Vedānta Society of Hollywood, U.S.A., in its issues for September-October 1953, November-December 1953 and January-February 1954, (ceased publication since 1970).

The Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission in the capital of India is a man with endless demands on his time and strength. Swami Ranganathananda talks every Sunday on the Mission grounds on the *Bhagavad-Gītā* to a huge number of people—Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Hindus of every persuasion, women, university instructors, government clerks, students, and many who, like himself, have come to New Delhi from Karachi since the partition of India.

I found Swami to be extraordinarily conversant with the difficulties that confront the Western mind. Though his Sunday talks were, I thought, models of organization and clarity, the habits of a lifetime of Western investigative rationalism proved too much for me. I sought him out privately, busy though I knew he was. The talks printed here represent the sum of our private conversations and incorporate material taken from lectures which Swami gave at the Mission and over the All-India Radio and at the University of Delhi.

Tell me, Swami, I said, does religion have anything to do with politics outside of giving it a sense of moral uplift? Is the search for faith entirely personal? Is religion all mysticism and meditating alone and letting the rest of the world go hang?

Primarily, religion is a value which is deeply personal, Swami Ranganathananda said. It takes hold of an individual when he has finished with values which are sensual and relative and when he seeks for a value which is transcendental and absolute. Spirituality—Godliness—is an end-value in itself. Indian thought refers to it as the highest excellence. We call this side of religion *niḥśhreyasa,* the consummation of freedom through the realization of truth. It is the supreme end to be sought after by man.

All the other ends and values are those which man achieves in the social context in response to his deeply felt craving for gross or refined joys and satisfaction. We call those ends *abhyudaya.* Now we cannot achieve this latter except in the context of a society or group; just as, to achieve ultimate spirituality, a man walks alone to the Alone. But though religion in its essential nature is trans-social and individual, it has a secondary yet significant role in the important sphere of social relations.

Yet we know from history, I said, that when religion has played its part in the sphere of social relations, it has frequently stood in the way of human progress and welfare, siding with the most backward elements of the society of its time, in fact lending them support and, frequently, justification. What do you say to that?

History does indeed contain many such instances, Swami said. To deal with the subject of the role of religion in politics is therefore a delicate task, especially in present-day India where there has been an abuse and misuse of religion in recent years to the detriment of a correct assessment of the role of religion, on the one hand, and of the happiness and welfare of millions, on the other.

Yet it is worthwhile to face the task, for the stakes involved are high. There is a real need today to state the precise scope of religion both in relation to the individual and as a social force, and the contribution it can make to the health and stability of the social order. Both politics and religion stand to gain from an approach to each other, under the guidance of a philosophy such as the Vedanta, which dares to view life in its totality and wholeness, and which, remember, has for its declared objective the happiness and welfare of humanity as a whole.

But our world, I said, is full of irreconcilables—irresistible forces against immovable objects. Are you saying that, in this tangle of conflicts and divergent loyalties, religion can do anything?

I am indeed, Swami said. Religion has to play a vital, progressive, and dynamic role. The aim of religion is to raise humanity to a higher ethical plane. In the past, our problems were few and comparatively simple. We had to deal with men organized into small clans and tribes. But the problems of today have become colossal because we have to deal, not with small sectional groups, but with large national societies and the whole of humanity itself. Whether we shall sink in or swim across the storming sea of the modern world will depend on our ability to organize the world into a single family on the basis of the spiritual oneness and equality of humanity.

Yes, I have heard something like that before, Swami. But religions disagree among themselves on just how to swim across the storming sea, as you put it. Each one seems to have its own answer.

Every religion worth the name contains, Swami said, certain universal elements along with others that are particular and parochial. The message of these universal elements in all religions to humanity is exactly identical. Nevertheless, it is true that religions, as practised by their followers, have been more regional, local, and parochial in outlook and action, to the detriment of the universal. Religious organizations have developed and stressed sectarian trends and loyalties.

But, in the present-day world, anything that is parochial will not satisfy the situation. Today we have to deal with innumerable forces, ideas, and aspirations of man which transcend the barriers of sect and creed. Hence the problem of negotiation and adjustment is tremendous. No narrow and selfish view will answer the demands of the modern age. We have to look at things in the larger context, from the wider point of view. Only if the universal elements in all religions can be released from their parochial and regional setting, can religion be made a progressive force in the world today.

That, Swami, would seem rather to call for something like science, I said, science which is supra-national.

Swami said: The present world has witnessed mighty advances in science and technology. But in spite of these revolutions in the domain of scientific thought and technique, modern man has not been able to discard religion altogether. Religion has not been allowed by the rational man of today to enter his life by the front door. Yet it enters his life surreptitiously by the back door. That shows that religion is still a vital force. But the religion that enters thus is, in the absence of the purifying aid of rational thought, mostly passionate, communal, and reactionary. Religion which regards all humanity as one and indivisible is the product of dispassionate thinking and hence progressive in outlook and action.

The true purpose and function of religion is written large in the history of human civilization. Its purpose is to make man truly civilized, cultured, and refined. Real civilization will come only when men and women have become truly cultured—when they have learned to refine their thoughts and chasten their feelings and sentiments. The function of religion is to *actualize* the spiritual oneness of humanity in ever-widening spheres, from one man to another, from two to a third, a fourth, from a small group, to another, to yet another—in ever-widening spheres, and to develop human fellowhip by reducing and obliterating the distance between man and man.

I have heard, Swami, I said, that religion may have had that function in the old days, but not now. Religion is a spent force. It cannot answer the demands of the modern scientific world, hence it is not required now. I've also heard it said that, in these days of scientific and technological advance, religion has even outlived its usefulness. This, I would say, is what a rational Westerner of my time and age has come to believe. Even those of us who aren't Marxists think there's a certain justice in the old charge about religion being the opium of the people. Of course, Marx and some other critics of religion (I am thinking of some friends of mine, writers mostly)—they say religion is nothing less than a barrier to social, political, economic, even intellectual progress. Religion, they say, is the misfortune of man today, an ancient incubus he has still to struggle with, not a help to him at all, but a terrible hindrance. What we now need, some of my friends say, is social improvement, and to attain this we should disregard religion. To what extent is this criticism of religion a valid one, Swami?

It is indeed true, Swami said, that we have made rapid advances in scientific discoveries, mechanical inventions, and material progress. But in spite of all our boasted achievements and progress in these lines, have we not moved backward as men? How backward we are is evident from our dealings with our neighbours and fellows. Have we moved forward in social feeling and sympathy? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. There still lies the savage in every one of us. Civilization is largely nothing but external trappings on the old savage.

The discovery by modern psychology of the savage in man has set a serious problem for the civilized individual of today to face and to solve. Our rationality and enlightenment are but skin-deep. The savage lies just below reason; it is mostly anti-reason. And it occasionally erupts to the surface, sweeping aside all rationality and humanity. The problem before us is to tame this savage within us and to evolve an integrated personality and a dynamic character which will retain the precious vigour of the savage but be chastened under the guidance of what we call *Buddhi*, enlightened reason. Untamed passions create the temper in the individual and society tending to disrupt the even course of life.

The world will have to come to religion to get the answer as to how to bring about harmony and adjustment in a world which is so ill-adjusted. Religion is called upon to play its part on a vaster plane today, in the collective life of millions as expressed in societies and states.

Religion is thus not outmoded. Far from it. If, after years of civilization and democracy and progress, men could wage two savage wars in the course of thirty years to destroy each other, can we call man civilized? Or say that he has outgrown the sustenance of religion? No, our passions are not tamed. The animal within us reigns supreme. Men have to live in harmony, not only with themselves, but also with their environment. Integrity within and integrity without. This is the real measure of a civilization. This is the vital function of religion. And civilization has to invite religion to its aid today.

Are you saying, Swami, I asked, that material progress has no place in the world today?

I did not say that, Swami answered. Materialism has its due place in the evolution and progress of human society. But when it dominates over the minds and hearts of men, it betokens danger. Divorced from ethical and spiritual foundations, it has become a source of danger everywhere today. It is the animal in man that prevails over the God in him. Violence and hatred are the dominant forces of the present-day world. The purpose and task of religion is to tame and subdue these forces of hatred and violence in man and thus make for a higher expression of his psychic energies and impulses. Impulses by themselves are neither good nor bad. They become one or the other in the way we use them. We can take hold of our raw impulses and energies and convert them into creative forces by means of an inner technology. By means of this inner technology taught by the science of religion, we are to control and tame the libido and raise it to the highest level of inspiration. Only a man who has controlled all his passions and impulses is truly religious. He becomes pure and holy. He has attained real education at its highest and best. Such a man not only raises himself to a higher ethical and spiritual plane—but he raises others as well.

But, Swami, I asked, if this is religion in its large purpose and intent, what role does it play in the narrow field of politics?

In countries of totalitarian ideology, politics is everything, Swami said. There is no aspect of human life left out of politics. All types of totalitarianism tend to dwarf the human personality. There are vast spaces of our being which transcend the sphere of politics. Nevertheless, politics is a legitimate field of collective human activity as it helps man to strive for and realize certain essential values of life. In India, particularly, politics today is fundamental, for the nation cries out for realization of these very values which I told you our ancient sages comprehensively described as *abhyudaya*. We cannot therefore neglect it, but must give due weight to politics as well as to other aspects and activities of human life. Man is not an isolated individual living remote from society; he is a social unit. As members, whether we be individuals or states, we are component parts of society and we are to regulate our conduct, behaviour, and activity, keeping in view the welfare of society as a whole.

Then, Swami, can you give me a definition of politics and a statement of what it must strive to achieve in the world today?

I think so. But first, have you seen that religion is not walking alone but walking with others as well?

I have.

And do you contend that a state can be organized without being informed with those truths which are a part of the great religious insights?

I am sure it cannot, Swami.

Then we can define politics, Swami said. Politics is a social science which seeks to ensure collective human welfare. As to what it must strive to achieve in the world today, since politics seeks to promote and ensure human welfare, we require knowledge and dispassionate thinking. If we study the evolution of society and the state in their historical aspect, we notice a slow but perceptible process of organization of men into wider and wider groups. The modern world has evolved the highest political entity in the form of the national and multi-national state. The world has not as yet advanced beyond this collective entity. We have not yet reached beyond the boundaries of the sovereign state.

The real problem before us is, then, how to enlarge the bounds of the political state and ultimately evolve a world state, a political organization of mankind as a whole. The problem is to utilize politics in order initially to ensure the welfare of man collectively organized within the state, and finally that of man in the context of the world community. That, after all, is the ideal of human unity which religion—all religion—has always set before us. And religion has to guide politics to that consummation. That is why religion is central to politics, as indeed it is to all ilfe.

2. A DIALOGUE ON SCIENCE AND RELIGION

The mind that questions, and questions with a serious intent and purpose, said Swami, and tests and verifies the answers it gets, has a dynamic quality which enables it to forge ahead in the world of thought and things. In so forging ahead, it disturbs the wayside calm of untested dogmas and comfortable beliefs. Science is verified knowledge. The explosive character of modern scientific thought is the product of the impact of a rapid succession of verified knowledge against an intractable fund of dogmas, assumptions, and untested beliefs.

But, I said, these very dogmas, assumptions, and untested beliefs, many of which originate in one religion or another, have sought to stifle scientific inquiry at every turn, first at birth, and step by step at each stage of scientific progress.

I would certainly agree to that, Swami said. But the walls of the *Bastille* of ignorance and prejudice have fallen one by one before the onrushing waves of inquiry and illumination, illustrating the great saying of the Upaniṣads—'Truth alone triumphs, not untruth.'

Then you see no conflict between religion and science? I said.

Only with ignorance does science conflict, Swami said. The history of science is the history of triumph of the spirit of free inquiry over mere opinion, prejudice, and dogma. It is a remarkable adventure of the human spirit which has borne abundant fruits not only mental but also material.

The success of science has meant the defeat of its opposition. It is one of the unfortunate episodes of history, especially of modern European history, that the organization of the forces of prejudice came from the side of religion. By the end of the last century, science had acquired high prestige and authority while religion was discredited, first as a dangerous error and, later, as a harmless illusion.

So it is a fact, is it not, Swami, I said, that religion was eclipsed in the Western world in the last century? Why do we come back to it—tentatively, uncertainly—many of us, as though it still possesses some answers, some values we have not been able to find in this century that came out of the last? Is all this a reversion? Is our quest for faith a crawling into some comfortable cave where all doubt is ended, life is comfortable, smooth and untroubled? Is that why some of us turn today toward religion?

It is true, Swami said, that the nineteenth century saw the eclipse of religion, certainly in Europe. But there was an uneasy feeling in the hearts of many thinkers that something of deep value to man and his civilization had also been overthrown. And they attempted a reassessment of the meaning and scope of religion with a view to making it accord with the spirit and temper of science. To this great task of reconstructing the mental life of modern man by bridging the gulf between faith and reason on the basis of a unified view of man and a truer conception of the spiritual life, the contribution of Indian thought is unique and lasting.

Ever since the time of the Upaniṣads, India has tenaciously held to a view of religion which makes it a high adventure of the spirit, a converging life-endeavour to realize and grasp the hidden meaning of existence. No, a quest for faith is not, as you put it, a search for a cave where one remains untroubled. Faith in India did not mean a cosy belief to rest by; it is a torch to set the soul on fire with a longing for spiritual realization. In the absence of this longing and struggle, the belief of the faithful does not differ much from the unbelief of the faithless. Belief, with most people, says Swami Vivekananda, is simply another name for 'not-thinking-carelessness.'

Religious earnestness with people of this class means, especially when organized under a Church or a theocratic state, either the pursuit of aggressive religious proselytism or of jehads and crusades. They cannot understand the meaning of that earnestness which proceeds from an inner spiritual hunger.

No dogma or creed or frenzied acts can satisfy this hunger of a religious heart. Its bread is spiritual realization. Religion is a matter of inner experience, a coming in touch with spiritual facts and not a matter of belief, or dogma, or conformity. No all-powerful church therefore arose in India to organize the faithful on the basis of dogma and creed and claiming divine authority for its opinions and judgements. No such authority can thrive where religion means a quest and not a conformity.

A spiritual view of religion, as distinguished from a creedal or dogmatic view, makes religion not only cultivate a spirit of toleration and of questioning and inquiry in its own sphere, but also foster it in every other department of life. *The Bhagavad-Gitā* declares that a spirit of inquiry into the *meaning* of religion takes an aspirant beyond the authority of the words of scripture and the mandate of tradition. He becomes an experimenter himself, instead of remaining a mere believer. Indian religious thought has taken recourse to *jijñāsa,* or inquiry, for the formulation of its views, be it *Brahma-jijñāsā* or *dharma-jijñāsā.*

This sublime attitude to religion and thought is the fruit of the unified view of the mental life of man which India learned from her Upaniṣads and which she assimilated into her mind and mood by a universal acceptance of all forms of faith and by showing due regard to all knowledge, whether sacred or secular. 'There are two types of knowledge to be cultivated,' says one of our Upaniṣads, '*the parā,* or the supreme, and the *aparā,* or the ordinary.' To the category of the *aparā,* or the ordinary, belong the Vedas, the science and the arts, which deal with the perishable and the changing. But that is supreme knowledge—*parā*—by which the imperishable is known. And the latter, the Upaniṣad significantly adds, is the basis of the former—*Brahma-vidyā* is *sarva-vidyā-pratiṣṭhā,* philosophy is the basis of all science.

I would comment, Swami, I said, that I have met not a few scientists who would grow most impatient with this kind of talk. I'm sorry to keep referring to them, or their point of view. It is something we in the West have all absorbed and keep thinking about, if only in the back of our minds. All this talk of 'mystery' or the 'unknown,' or the 'imperishable' they would find most distasteful.

Swami said: 'The dogmatism and cocksureness which stifle the spirit of free inquiry are as much enemies of true science as of true religion. I well know scientists are not wanting today who would, taking a narrow view of the scope and function of science, prefer to go the dogmatic way, and cry halt to advancing knowledge and unified experience. That way spells danger to science now as it has spelled danger to religion before. A greater devotion to the spirit of free inquiry and a broader conception of the aim and temper of science is our only safeguard against such a pitfall.

To be fair, I said, there are also a number of scientists who have wound up with a sense of wonder and awe, something that is humble and unsure, willing to recognize the unknown, or that *parā* of which you spoke. I am thinking of a friend of mine, an astronomer, who works with the two-hundred inch telescope on Mount Palomar. I remember one night, in a conversation, his wife was being awfully 'reasonable' about something. Everything had to fit, to dovetail neatly, to have some pat explanation. She turned to her great scientist-husband and said, 'Isn't that so?' 'I don't know,' he said. 'When you look out there long enough, there are a lot of things you're not sure of any more.'

J. A. Thomson put it this way, said Swami, 'At the end of his intellectual tether, man has never ceased to be religious.' Yes, you are right; there are scientists today who know 'there are a lot of things you're not sure of any more.' If the nineteenth century was the century of conflict and division, the twentieth bids fair to become the century of reconciliation and union as a result of a sincere effort on the part of both science and religion to reassess themselves and understand the other.

The humility of twentieth-century science presents a sharp and welcome contrast to the cocksureness of its nineteenth-century counterpart. It has realized that the spirit of inquiry on which it has thrived may find expression in fields beyond its own narrow departments and that it is this spirit, unbiased by personal feeling, that makes a study scientific and not the mere subject of that study. Or, to quote Thomson again: 'Science is not wrapped up with any particular body of facts; it is characterized as an intellectual attitude. It is not tied down to any particular methods of inquiry; it is simply sincere critical thought which admits conclusions only when these are based on evidence.' This wider view of science as a discipline and a temper enables us to class as scientific the study of the facts of the inner world which religion has set to itself.

And this has been the Indian approach to religion. It was the absence of this approach that made religion in Europe less and less equipped to meet the challenge of advancing knowledge. Here, I will read to you how Swami Vivekananda summed up, in a lecture delivered in England in 1896, the results of this neglect on modern man:

> 'The foundations have all been undermined; and the modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows in the privacy of his heart that he can no more 'believe. Believing certain things because an organized body of priests tells him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the man knows to be impossible for him. ...'

And pleading for a rational approach to religion with a view to easing the prevailing conflict between science and religion, he continues:

> 'Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason, through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation which we apply to science and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of religion? In my opinion, this must be so, and I am also of opinion that the sooner it is done, the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes, the better. ... All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation.'

I gather, Swami, from what you have said and what you have quoted of Swami Vivekananda as saying, that there is a science of religion, that in point of fact there is no conflict between science and religion. Am I right, then?

Precisely, said Swami. The practice of religion is nothing but a ceaseless quest after the facts of the inner life; a dispassionate study of these facts constitutes the science of religion which seeks to unravel the mystery of our inner being—the lights that guide us and the laws that mould us. If Man, the Known, constituted of his body and its environing world, is the subject of the natural sciences, Man, the Unknown is the subject of the science of religion. The synthesis of both these sciences is the high function of philosophy as understood in India. It is this function which the Vedānta has performed in this country, ever since the time of the Upaniṣads. Exercising a pervasive and effective influence on our national thought and culture, the Vedānta has spared us not only the fruitless opposition of reason to faith and *vice versa*,, but also the more dangerous manifestation of this opposition in the form of intolerance, persecution, and suppression of opinion.

The need for a Vedāntic approach to science and religion is insistent today when both have shed their respective prejudices and come closer to each other imbued with the passion to serve man and save his civilization. It is only such a philosophy of synthesis, which blends in itself the flavour of the faith of religion and the reason of science, that can reconstruct modern man by restoring to him the integrity of his being and the unity of that being with the environing world.

3. A DIALOGUE ON THE MEANING OF VEDĀNTA

As the time approached for me to leave New Delhi, I called on Swami Ranganathananda. I was not sure, I declared, that I had absorbed all that we had talked about. I had surely accomplished this, I thought; I had overcome the unconscious philosophical chauvinism of the Western intellectual who, used to his own modes of thought and expression, his own categories and vocabulary, views anything emanating from the East as a kind of exotic flowering fit for cultists or middle-aged relics. This attitude may have been justified by such misuse of Eastern philosophy as many of us had encountered; but there was more to it than that. No matter now, I believe I have caught a glimpse in the Vedānta of something worth pursuing, not in a spirit of dogmatism but as a view of life with meaning for me, for my world, for my time. It was a little like seeing Kanchanjangha from Darjeeling when, for perhaps ten minutes, the clouds part and then the great peak is seen, towering, vast, thundering before you—and then is lost. The clouds engulf it again; you know it is there; but how to tell someone who has not seen it? Have you seen enough of it to describe it? Are you sure you quite believe what you have seen? At the risk of seeming obtuse or stupid, then, I had to ask Swami to give me the broad outlines of what I had glimpsed, to indicate where I might further look, study, as well as to describe what he had shown me. We might as well begin with a historical definition: What precisely is the Vedānta?

The closing period of the Vedic age in ancient Indian history was marked by an intense activity, said Swami, when some of the greatest of our thinkers and sages wrestled with the problems of life and experience. The record of these endeavours has been preserved for posterity in the Upaniṣads, which form the closing portions of a vast and varied Vedic literature. Containing as they do the quintessence of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads are also known as the Vedanta.

One of the most important features of the Upaniṣads is a fearless quest for truth. In them we come across students and teachers discussing and expounding basic problems of religion and philosophy, as Max Muller has put it, 'undisturbed by the thought of there being a public to please or critics to appease.' They considered no sacrifice too great in their search for truth. Not to speak of earthly pleasures and heavenly charms, they dared to achieve the still more difficult and rare sacrifice which the seeker after truth is called upon to make: the sacrifice of pet opinions and pleasing prejudices.

A second important feature is the atmosphere of freedom pervading the quest for truth in the Upaniṣads. Thought forges ahead from step to step under the stimulus of a passion for truth and in an atmosphere of perfect freedom. With no fear of authority or love for dogma as such, there emerges this edifice we know as the Vedānta, whose rationality and spirituality have made it a synthesis of philosophy and religion in one.

Again, I said, I have to give voice to my Western prejudices. Is this 'edifice' a retreat from the world? Not that there's anything inherently wrong in that, I suppose, but is that what it turns out to be: a withdrawal from the world of action?

Not at all, said Swami, smiling. Again, let me refer to Max Müller and read to you what he, who was so astounded by the boldness and sweep of thought of the Indian sages, said:

> 'And this is the feeling which I cannot resist in examining the ancient Vedānta. Other philosophers have denied the reality of the world as perceived by us; but no one has ventured to deny at the same time the reality of what we call the ego, the senses, and the mind and their inherent forms. And yet, after lifting the Self above body and soul, after uniting heaven and earth, God and man, Brahman and Ātman, these Vedānta philosophers have destroyed nothing in the life of the phenomenal beings who have to act and to fulfil their duties in this phenomenal world. On the contrary, they have shown that there can be nothing phenomenal without something that is real, and that goodness and virtue, faith and works, are necessary as a preparation, nay as a *sine qua non* for the attainment of that highest knowledge which brings the soul back to its source and to its home and restores it to its true nature, to its true selfhood in Brahman.'

Then, I said, the Vedanta doesn't ask us to deny life?

Far from it, said Swami. Life is viewed as an adventure of the spirit in the world of time and space. In a famous passage of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad,* this is elaborated with the help of a significant imagery—the imagery of the chariot. Man, with his equipment of body, the senses, mind, and intellect finds his best symbol in a chariot, with its horses, reins and rider. Such a chariot is meant to be put on the road and driven to its appointed destination. The success of the journey depends less on the smoothness of the road than on the strength of the chariot, the vigour of the horses, the toughness of the reins and the discernment of the charioteer. Weakness in any of these links will spell disaster for the whole venture.

Life, then, is a creative adventure. It finds its fulfilment in the course and at the end of a dynamic process and not in the context of a static complacency. 'All expansion is life; all contraction is death,' says Swami Vivekananda. In the long journey to the temple of unity of being, man experiences varying stages of excellence of truth, beauty and goodness, physical or mental, individual or social. At the summit, he is promised the *summum bonum*. But this long and arduous journey through life needs for its success an effective training of the personality. And that training is indicated in a memorable verse in the Upaniṣads where we are asked to combine strength of the body and vigour of the senses with force of will and conviction, clearness of vision and calmness of judgment. 'He attains,' it says, 'the highest excellence who has an enlightened intelligence as charioteer and a tough determination as reins.'

I see, I said. Then it's a kind of code of action, a set of rules by which one behaves?

This search, Swami said, for the meaning of life and experience, guided as it was by a pure passion for truth and untarnished by the predilections of personality, has imparted the quality of universality to its philosophy and perenniality to its message. Unlike philosophies elsewhere and other systems here, the Vedānta is a living philosophy. From the time that it was first expounded in that dim antiquity down to our own times, it has been the spiritual inspiration behind the movements of India's soul. The presence of that inspiration in a concentrated measure has ushered in memorable creative epochs in Indian history. The ages of the *Gītā*, Buddha, and Śaṅkara in the past, and of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in the present, are such landmarks in our ancient and modern history.

No, the Upaniṣads are not interested in forging rules and laws for the conduct of our daily lives. If they had done so, they would have reduced themselves to the level of systems that have had their day and then disappear. Rules and laws that nourish one age tend to choke a later age. The Upaniṣads addressed themselves to the discovery of the timeless Reality in man and Nature and to providing the food of spirituality to him and to quench his nameless and perennial thirst for the eternal. The work of forging laws and rules to guide man's daily conduct and behaviour it left to the *Smṛtis* and *Dharma Sastras* in the past, as it would leave it to the political constitutions and social consciences of today.

And so, Swami, I said, what does it say? What is the nature of this that I have seen? Can one indicate it?

Its theme is freedom. Its message, fearlessness, said Swami.

It summons men and women to the mighty adventure of the spirit in all its phases, to the realization, by each one, of his or her essential spiritual and divine nature and the transcendence of the limitations of finitude.

It explains every great movement—social, religious or political—nay the phenomena of life itself, as an expression of the urge to freedom inherent in every organism: the infinite caught in a cell or a body, a social scheme or a political system, in a texture of relations or in the network of relativity.

Freedom is the ground and freedom is the goal of all life, according to Vedanta and its constant refrain therefore is, in the words of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad:* 'Arise and awake and, approaching the great ones, enlighten yourself.'

In thus placing emphasis on the fundamental and the perennial and wisely relegating to the *Smṛtis* the *temporal and the parochial*, the Vedanta not only insured for itself an immortal hegemony over human life and destiny but also imparted to the Indian cultural experiment a resilience and adaptability which has insured its immortality as well.

To the Upaniṣads we owe that impressive record of toleration characteristic of our whole cultural and religious history. To them we owe the periodical renewal of our springs of life when they seem all but choked and about to dry up. To them, also, we owe the absence of a heavy hand of an all-powerful church and an infallible dogma on the national life and mind. Thus, free spirits have emerged and functioned unhampered in succeeding eras—an impressive feature of India's long history. And so, also, they will arise the world over.

27

AN INTERVIEW WITH SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA *

1. *Introduction*

Shri Pradeep Singh: *When were you born, Sir?*

Swami Ranganathananda: 15th December 1908, in a little village called Trikkur, six miles from the town of Trichur, in Kerala.

P. S.: *Can you tell some details about your childhood, adolescence, and youth, sir?*

Swami: I used to feel full of energy as a child. In my boyhood, I took great interest in gardening and swimming. Even today, I am a very swift swimmer. Then, of course, games. Not much of study, except at the age of 14, when I took interest in Vivekananda literature.

P. S.: *Did you mix with other children and play?*

Swami: Plenty, plenty. I was very good at gathering children for play—and even for work. In that far-away-period, 1917-18, there was a road in the village which had become slushy due to heavy rain. I gathered boys of my age and set about making the road better. Such kind of group activities I used to love and organize. And I was very fond of play.

P. S. *What kind of games?*

Swami: Mostly village games. What you call 'hadu dudu' or 'kabaddi' was my favourite. Then came marbles—if I sat down to play at noon, I would get up only at seven in the evening. I was an expert in marbles. In fact, whatever I used to do, I used to do with such zest, that I would forget the whole world at that time.

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* The Interview which was conducted by Shri Pradeep Singh, student of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, during the Swami's lectures at the I. I. T. in February 1979, and which appeared in the *Bhavans Journal* of 26 April 1979

P.S.: *Coming to your career, how were you attracted to the monastic life from early childhood?*

Swami: From early childhood, there was a certain religious atmosphere in the house, where holy books like, *The Srimad Bhāgavatam* were read by father and mother. I used to go to the nearby Śiva temple regularly. Then I used to memorize many verses and hymns, particularly Saṅkarācārya's hymns, in Sanskrit. The turning point came when I read that great book *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.* That was at about the age of 14, when all the pent-up spiritual emotions and feelings, vague and unorganized till then, became clarified.

A friend had borrowed the book from the Vivekodayam High School library in Trichur. He read it. Then he came and asked me, 'Do you want to read this book?' I said, 'Yes', and took the book without knowing what it was.

As I started reading it, it just gripped me. When I finished reading the *Gospel,* my friend came with another book. Then the works of Vivekananda came and there was almost an explosion in my mind.

P.S.: *At that time you were 14?*

Swami: Fourteen and a half. Up to 17½, this continued—this kind of study. From this long study, two great ideas emerged strong in my mind. One, love of God who is the centre of our spiritual tradition; another, love of Man—love for the common people.

P.S: *At such a tender age?*

Swami: There was absolute surety and clarity about these two goals—there was no need for worry or hesitation. The idea was driven home in my mind—that this life is to be dedicated to God and Man, God in Man. Swami Vivekananda emphasizes it again and again. 'Look at these—the poor, the ill-treated, the exploited—they are your God. Worship them, serve them.'

P. S.: *It appears that your family influence must have come in this. A spiritual atmosphere was prevailing in your home. you said.*

Swami: No, they were religious—but I will not call them spiritual. Because, this kind of religion is associated with a feudal social set up, with all those *do's* and *don'ts*. But they were generally human, generally good hearted, within the limits of that feudal system. When I became slightly older, that feudal system did not suit me. Untouchability somehow repulsed me from the very beginning. I used to break all these rules even in the village. I used to go to school and come back without bathing. I would touch everybody after touching untouchables!

P. S.: *What was your idea behind it?*

Swami: Because I felt it was absolutely wrong! Why should you treat human beings in any other way? Nobody came to tell me all these things, but it came on its own. So I used to befriend the untouchables and even eat with them—all against opposition from the people at home. But I didn't care. That's why the untouchables used to adore me. In fact, when I left for *Sannyās,* they shed tears. What feelings they had! And this became philosophically strengthened after reading the Vivekananda literature.

P. S.: *What did your parents think of the career you were going for?*

Swami: They wanted me to be with them, and they knew that I had an extra dose of public spirit. I never cared for myself, whether at home or outside. So they had great love for me, and expected that I will help them in their family affairs, improve their financial condition, and so on—as parents everywhere expect.

When they found me taking interest in this sort of literature, at first they did not object. But when they found me getting deep into it, they became afraid. So, once they tried to stop me and even compel me a little. But I stood firmly and said, 'This is my personal matter. Whatever I think worthwhile, I will do.'

That was at the age of 15. And thereafter they didn't trouble me at all, because I was so obedient and disciplined in everything else in the house. But, in this matter, I stood firm.

P. S.: *How did you get motivated to join the Ramakrishna Mission, of all places?*

Swami: Well, Swami Vivekananda writes and speaks to you all through— 'Why not sacrifice one life for the good of the common people?' He repeats this again and again. 'What is the use of this life for the sake of self-advertisement, when millions have been starving for ages? This is the time to do great work'. These ideas there are aplenty in Vivekananda's lectures and letters. And when I used to read them, tears used to come from the eyes—what a noble life it is! So that idea grew in the mind and, within three years, it became thoroughly fixed—this would be my goal in life.

Once (in 1937) I was addressing a public meeting in a place called Madanapalli in Andhra Pradesh. I didn't know who the audience were. They asked me this question. 'What induced you to become a monk?' I replied: 'When I read Vivekananda's lectures, this particular sentence gave me tremendous inspiration: "There are greater things to be done in this country than aspiring to become lawyers and picking up quarrels!'

There was such a burst of laughter from the audience, because most of them were pleaders! This kind of literature is not just a book—it is a message, there is a special power in it. Every word is a source of power. This is my experience, and of thousands of others, including Romain Rolland, the great French biographer of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, and the man who received Nobel Prize for Literature. In his book on Vivekananda, he says:

> His words are great music, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books at thirty years' distance — without receiving a thrill through my body, like an electric shock. And what shocks and transports must have been produced when, in burning words, they issued from the lips of the hero?'

When I first read it, I said, 'How true!' Along with me, there are thousands who have received that shock. A tremendous shock!

And even today, there are hundreds who are experiencing that shock. That humdrum life becomes shocked. You get a real aim in life—worthwhile, noble. That is a great stimulus.

P. S.: *Sir, what were your first impressions on joining the Ramakrishna Mission?*

Swami: My home—I felt I belonged to it all through, in spite of pull from my home. I had loving parents, loving brothers and sisters, and a very beautiful country atmosphere in Kerala.

P. S.: *How far was it from the Ashrama?*

Swami: Oh, nearly 300 miles away. So, to leave all that, I felt a little sorry. But the chance of living a great life in an ashrama enabled me to overcome those feelings. It was a poor Ashrama, not much to eat and hardly any convenience. But what did it matter? This life is given to us by Sri Ramakrishna—it belongs to him. Now I am only to work out his great Mission. That thought sustained me and I started working very hard for the first six years.

P. S.: *What type of normal routine did you lead there?*

Swami: The Ashrama in Mysore had no money, it had no servants, it had no cooks. So I had to do all the cooking, washing, cleaning, and everything. For six years I was the cook, dish-washer, house keeper, gardener. And I did it with immense joy. Even when I look at it now—what a joy it was!

P. S: *Can you recall your feelings at the time of your initiation?*

Swami: Oh yes. That happened in Ootacamund. A disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, by name Mahāpurush Shivananda, was living there at the time. His real name was Tarak. We used to address him as Mahapurush Maharaj. He was the second President of the Ramakrishna Order.

The Swamiji in charge of Mysore, Swami Siddheshwarananda, who later developed the Ramakrishna Ashrama in Gretz near Paris, took me from Trichur to Mysore via Ooty, just after I left home. He advised me to take initiation from Swami Shivananda, a very lovable soul, and having no pretensions to guruship or any such thing.

Three or four other youngsters also took initiation on the same day. I didn't know anything about initiation at that time. So I sat by his side and he gave me a *mantra.* Then he asked me, 'Have you got anything to offer as *Guru-dakṣiṇa* (offering to the Guru)?' I said 'Sorry, I have not got anything. I have come from my home only with a cloth, a shirt, and a towel—nothing else'. So he took three or four mangoes from his right side and handed them over to me. 'Now give these back to me', he said. That was the *Guru–dakṣiṇa.* It was such a simple matter!

But when I took that initiation, I remembered a dream that I had when I was about ten years old. That dream was re-enacted exactly in this particualr situation. Just going up, up, up and then being ushered into the presence of a divine soul, a devout soul, who my heart said, was Śiva. As I sat by his side, he told me something.

I had told about the dream only to my mother. She also said: 'Don't tell it to anyone, it is such a beautiful thing.' So that was re-enacted exactly, sitting by the side of an old man, whose name was Shivananda, and very high up, in Ooty. So that was an interesting experience.

P. S: *Could you please tell something about the 'brahmachārī' stage?*

Swami: In those days, the first three years were known as the probationary period. Then, in 1929, I took the vows of Brahmacharya. For this, I went to Belur Math near Calcutta. That was a wonderful event, when my Guru, Swami Shivananda, was also present in front of us, and various *mantras* were chanted, and *homa* was performed. These *mantras* are wonderful. The essence of these *mantras* are, "I dedicate this life, with all its talents, for the service of God and Man."

As soon as the ceremony is over, we are given a new set of clothes, along with a new name. Parents gave the name Śaṇkaran. Now it became Yati Chaitanya. The word *Chaitanya* means spiritual consciousness. For the next four years, this continued. Then in 1933, *Sannyās* (monastic initiation) was given. That is something extraordinary. The Vedic *Sannyās*—its *mantras*, its method—is something extraordinary. The highest philosophy is put into practice there. 'I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not the senses; I am the pure Self, ever free, ever pure.'

This knowledge we want to impress on the mind and we pray to God to give us that awareness. Then, finally, a new set of clothes, all of *gerua* colour, are given, along with a new name, ending with the word *ānanda, bliss*. The name is chosen by the Guru. Swami Ranganathananda—finally this name came—that's my monastic name. That's what Swami Shivananda did, so far as I am concerned.

P. S.: *Out of the various Gurus you had in the Mission, who impressed you the most?*

Swami: You see, Ramakrishna's disciples belong to a category all by itself. And I had opportunity to meet several of them. Swami Vivekananda, the Holy Mother, and Swami Brahmananda had passed away. So we could study them only in books, and in tradition. Several other disciples of Ramakrishna, like Swami Premananda, (sic. not Premananda, but Akhandananda) were there in the Mission. But direct access (as Guru) was only to Swami Shivananda. He was very remarkable, very human, and very modern, too. There were thousands who were inspired by him.

P. S.: *Talking about your present life, what is your daily routine when you are not travelling?*

Swami: If I am in charge of a centre, naturally all the responsibilities of the centre are on me. Our own personal life continues—daily meditation, study. Then there is work.

P. S.: *What are your hobbies and interests?*

Swami: Everything that interests man is interesting to me. So I don't know where my interest ends. Good work is a hobby for me. For example, work in slums or serving a leper or meeting young students, talking with them, or addressing all sorts of audiences, from administrators to businessmen. In fact, all that we do is considered as worship of God. 'Work itself is worship' is the teaching, and I fully accept that teaching.

P. S.: *Do you have a liking for any special kind of diet?*

Swami: I like everything. Whatever is available, I begin to like. I tell the mind: 'You must take this now, you must like it'. Immediately the mind says: 'I like it'. Once a doctor told me to live on three pounds of milk a day. Immediately, I began to like that three pounds of milk. Even simple sago I had taken for six months. If you tell the mind: 'You must like it', it begins to like it. That's a beautiful idea.

P. S.: *It is said that every human being has certain shortcomings. After so many years of rigorous discipline, what would you still like to improve in yourself?*

Swami: It is a continuous thing, which Ramakrishna calls—*jatodin bāchi, tatodin shikhi*, in Bengali—As long as I live, so long do

I learn. And I fully accept this idea. So we try to improve ourselves, make ourselves better and better. This is the concept of human development which we live by. We want everybody to accept this idea.

P. S.: *Can you tell in brief the concept of God, Sir?*

Swami: Concept of God? A concept is just an idea. And God is the Self behind the conceiver. The Eternal Self of Man—that's the Vedāntic concept of God.

'Tell me about that God, Brahman, which is Infinite, but which is given in experience as the Eternal Self of all', Sage Yājñavalkya is asked in the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*. Not a mere speculative Brahman, but a real, experiential Brahman. That is the basic teaching of the Upaniṣads— God can be realized How? He is the Self of all, He is closest to us, at the back of our own consciousness. That is the concept of the Divine. Sri Ramakrishna has said: 'See God with eyes open when you live and work; see God with eyes closed when you sit in meditation. Everywhere it is God only.'

P. S.: *What has been the most difficult moments in your life?*

Swami: In running institutions, there are many difficulties. We don't expect it to be otherwise. Work itself is a big challenge. With whatever strength is there, and with a sense of dedication and a prayerful attitude, we try to work. Mistakes have been there, but not too serious ones. And we don't expect life to be without mistakes 'Don't mind mistakes. In this battlefield of life, the dust of mistakes must be raised: he who is so thin-skinned as not to be able to bear them, let him get out of the ranks!' These are the words of Swami Vivekananda.

When you work, there will be mistakes. But because of that, I won't work—this is not a correct attitude. Do work, with the best of intention, best of motive, and correct whatever mistakes that may come.

P. S.: *How many years do you think you can devote to active Ramakrishna Mission work now?*

Swami: I think five to ten years of active work. Generally, we try to keep good health, because we consider health very important for the work; not for one's own indulgence. The body is given to Sri

Ramakrishna's work. So, that attitude makes you take care of the body, just to keep it fit and fine. But even then, old age will come, body becomes weaker and weaker—it is quite natural. So we face it when it comes to that. But it is always a joy that we have given the best life in service to other people. It is a great satisfaction to have spent one's life in service to the people, and God. Buddha said to Ananda. 'Ananda, this body was so strong; it has climbed mountains, it has crossed forests—now it cannot stand on itself—see the nature of this body. It has to be tied together like an old bullock cart.' But the Self in man is ever free. This attitude must be maintained; says Sri Ramakrishna: 'Oh my body, be busy with your ailments, oh my mind, be busy with your joy of God.' If there is strength of mind, we can really live up to that. Sometimes, the body can pull the mind down. But we have to resist it.

P. S: *There is a noticeable trend among outstanding boxers, for example, to take up preaching and do spiritual work after they retire. One example is George Foreman. What do you think is the reason for such a change for people who have spent their lives in violence and bloodshed?*

Swami: It must be the result of the general atmosphere of spiritual striving, you know, in some parts of the world just now. They read by chance a book, or come in touch with a holy person—and that makes a change. That is how awakening comes. We call it spiritual awakening. A beautiful idea—you were leading a humdrum life—and here is something new.

P. S.: *The famous boxer Mohammed Ali keeps on proclaiming himself as a messenger of Allah for the Muslims. Looking at the self-discipline and hard work he has put in his career, don't you think he has the potential to make a great saint?*

Swami: Very much; one twist is enough. Why? The Vedāntic teaching is that the Divine is sleeping in all of us. Just like a mine—you remove a stone, and you get the treasure. Many wrestlers in India have been highly spiritual. And they are devotees of Hanumān.

P. S.: *When was spiritual consciousness at its peak in India, Sir?*

Swami: I can tell you Swami Vivekananda's opinion, because that's also what I appreciate. In the wake of Buddha, the highest moral development took place for the first few centuries. Then Buddhism became corrupted due to various other new influences coming in. Morality and spiritual life became so natural in the period after Buddha. The same humanistic impulse will come in the modern period too.

P. S.: *How will advancement in science and technology affect human relations in the future?*

Swami: It will be extremely bad, if it will be going on under the present philosophy of Man. What is that? An organic system seeking organic satisfactions. We are the Infinite Ātman, that's our true nature—if this attitude prevails, then none of these things can harm us. Otherwise, we will be reduced to *Animal Farm Society*. But once this deeper philosophy comes, none of these things can affect the human situation. We see life in a higher dimension. That higher dimension is absent today, ignored today, trifled with today; therefore, this confusion. Otherwise not. Knowledge can never be dangerous, as long as we know it has two dimensions—knowledge of the world, knowledge of God.

28

AN INTERVIEW WITH SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA*

1. *Introduction*

Swami Ranganathananda is an initiate of the Ramakrishna Order and the Head of their centre in Hyderabad, in central India. In January this year, Swamiji led a two-day retreat organized by the International Centre of Studies and Research in Adyar, Madras. The focus of the retreat was a fascinating exploration of the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, an ancient and poetic treatise on the mystic philosophy of the Hindus. Afterwards, *Phoenix* editor Emilio spoke to Swamiji about some aspects of the spiritual teachings.

Phoenix: *Could you tell us something about the Ramakrishna Order? What does being a member of the Order imply?*

Swamiji: It implies life dedication to live in and serve this particular Order. Life dedication! But it does not imply any acceptance of dogmas or sectarianism. We follow the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, which are part of the Hindu tradition, and we accept other religions. But we are not a sect. As monks, we have our Guru, just like every other monastic Order. Anybody can take to it; anybody can say: 'I am a devotee of Ramakrishna.'

Phoenix: *What exactly does it mean to be a Swami? How does one become a Swami?*

Swamiji: The word 'Swami' actually means a master, a master of oneself. It is generally applied to monks in India, because they are their own masters.

To become a Swami in the Ramakrishna Order, one must start

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*Interview by Editor Emilio, on behalf of *Phoenix Rising*, Journal of the youth section of the Theosophical Society, Adyar, during the 2-day spiritual retreat conducted by the Swami at the International Centre of Studies and Research of the Theosophical Society Headquarters at Adyar, Madras, in January 1979, and published in the Journal in its issues 3 and 4 of 1979 young. Generally, we take only people below the age of thirty. One must also have at least the minimum High school qualification, and no serious physical ailments, no dependents or ties at home, no marriage ties, and must be prepared to stay unmarried. After all this, if the candidate really has love for God and the spirit of renunciation, we accept him.

Then he undergoes a period of nine years of training in the Order. In the first five years, he is given the first initiation called *brahmacharya*, probationer's initiation. His name is also changed. After another four years, he gets final initiation into the monastic Order. Then his name is changed finally into one that ends with the word *ānanda* (joy, bliss) such as Vivekananda (the bliss of right discrimination).

In this way, we now have about a thousand people, drawn from all communities, classes, castes, and even different countries, like the United States, England, etc. It is an international monastic Order.

Phoenix: *At what point in this training does one actually become a Swami?*

Swamiji: After the nine years, if he is found fit. He is first examined, both medically and spiritually. If his spiritual qualities are genuine, he is invested in this garb and gets his new name, all of which is part of the monastic initiation. This kind of initiation comes from Vedic times, thousands of years back. We call it *Vedic sannyās*.

Phoenix: *What is the difference between a swami and a sadhu?*

Swamiji: A sadhu is merely a good man, not necessarily belonging to any Order. The word 'sadhu' actually means good. Swami is a title used for monks. It does not necessarily imply a great spiritual achievement: just a monk. When one has been initiated into a monastic Order, he is then addressed as 'Swami' instead of 'Mister'.

Phoenix: *Is brahmacharya a necessary prerequisite for a swami?*

Swamiji: Yes, a life-long *brahmacharya*. A swami never marries.

Phoenix: *What if someone has already been married before he came to you?*

Swamiji: We do not accept him . We say to him: 'Continue as you are. It is also a noble path. You can do wonderful work there. There is no need for changing into this .'

Phoenix: *But can a householder achieve ... ?*

Swamiji: Full realization! He can .

Phoenix: *Is it more difficult?*

Swamiji: In certain aspects, it is easier. Life is easier. He has his money, his needs are easily fulfilled—food and so on—whereas, for a monk, everything is uncertain . However, he must have detachment. Then he can attain realization. Why? Because Truth is hidden *in him*. It is the birthright of one and all. He can realize God, because God is his own nature.

Phoenix: *How can he go about it? Where to start?*

Swamiji: He has to change his attitude. He has to put God into his human relationships: wife, children, husband; God-emphasis must come everywhere .

Phoenix: *Does that mean that even he, although married, becomes a Brahmachari before achieving final realization?*

Swamiji: That comes when he develops enough spiritual strength . Then, with the agreement of the wife or the husband, they can live a celibate life . That is a high ideal .

Phoenix: *Is this a prerequisite for a spiritual life?*

Swamiji: Not necessarily. But what is required is restraint. Absolute restraint is necessary . A voluptuous life is not helpful on the spiritual path. That is, married life itself is a restrained life. Once a person marries, he must consider all members of the opposite sex, other than his companion, as sisters or brothers. Only with *one* he or she has a special relationship of a sexual nature. All the others are treated with respect and reverence. This has been followed in a big way by people in India. Even a tiny little girl is addressed as 'mother'.

Phoenix: *Gandhi went even further and advocated celibacy even for married couples. He called it 'married brahmacharya.'*

Swamiji: He was speaking about a high ideal, and people around him could not come up to that. Though he himself had weaknesses, which he overcame later, he had no concern for the weaknesses of others. In the actual teaching, we say: 'Act according to the measure of your strength.' There is no standard for all. Each one has his or her own measure. But the emphasis is: the more you restrain life at the organic level, the higher you develop on the spiritual level. Life at the organic level is the body level. Restraints are simply a means to a higher end, not an end in themselves. We have to rise above the body. Psychic energy is to be raised to a higher level.

Phoenix: *You accept only younger people into the Order. But many people think that philosophy and spirituality should come later in life, and that the young person should devote his energy to his family, his work, etc.*

Swamiji: We accept this view. For millions of people that is the way. But if there is a handful of people who do not want to go through this mill of discipline of the outward life, why should they? The call has come: *I want to enter straight into the spiritual life.* It is open to everyone. But it depends on the calling, how strong the motivation is. It depends where one is. Suppose you have enjoyed the worldly life in many births already. In the last birth, one has an inner attitude—'I want to achieve God'. Without the satisfaction of desires, we cannot become spiritual. But if you feel you are spiritual now, you have finished with the experience, you do not need it again.

Most people are not at that stage yet and must experience life first. Before we surrender everything, we must *have* something to surrender. That is why the first part of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* teaches manliness and strength; the second part, teaching complete surrender. So, the first stage is to develop the ego; the second stage: to surrender it.

Eventually, real renunciation comes. One first experiences money, power, pleasure. ... and finishes with it. Then it has no more attraction for him. There are better and higher things to think about. Only in that stage does one get really interested in God.

Phoenix: *How do you explain the tremendous awakening and interest in the spiritual life in the West in recent years? Is it a real or a passing interest?*

Swamiji: It is genuine. And it can be explained very easily. Three things should be understood: *bhoga, yoga, and roga. Bhoga* is all sense-pleasure, satisfaction on the organic level. Then we have *yoga*—spiritual aspiration. *Yoga* cannot come without *bhoga. Bhoga* comes first. After you have finished with *bhoga*. you have a choice: either *yoga* (spiritual development) or *roga* (physical and mental ailments). *Bhoga* will lead to *roga* if *yoga* does not come in between. That is, sense-satisfactions will lead to mental and physical ailments, if spiritual growth doesn't intervene.

Today, the world has seen *bhoga*. And I believe some *yoga* has started, hasn't it? People feel they want to go in search of something better, to grow spiritually. Western countries have plenty of *bhoga*, plenty of sensory amusements, and that is why *yoga* is a real experience there. People want it. There are beautiful things to be achieved. Young people are seeking for something higher: meditation, prayer, devotion, questioning, probing. ...

Phoenix: *How was it, then, that India has been a centre of spirituality for such a long time, without much bhoga to stimulate and sustain interest in the higher?*

Swamiji: This is because in the early stages of Indian history, this culture got a beautiful spiritual orientation through the Upaniṣads. That was a period when the most gifted minds took to religion as a science, not as mere poetry. People like Śaṅkarācārya, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the sages who wrote the Upaniṣads, etc., were brilliant minds. They gave such an orientation to Indian thinking and life that it became a constant factor in this country.

People respect religion here. A man of religion is highly honoured, more than any intellectual or military genius. Learning is respected in India, and wealth is respected, but the highest respect goes to the man of God. He may be a poor man, but if he has realized God, all will salute him, even kings. That is a sign of culture.

Phoenix: *You specify that what you are teaching is Advaita (the philosophy of Non-duality)?*

Swamiji: Advaita, but inclusive of Dvaita (the philosophy of Duality). Real Advaita includes all of Dvaita.

Phoenix: *You also teach Yoga and* **Vedānta.** *Could you define these words in relation to Advaita?*

Swamiji: Vedānta is the general term for the three systems of philosophy: Advaita, **Viśiṣṭa Advaita,** and Dvaita. Sometimes people use the word to mean only Advaita, but that is not correct. **Vedānta** includes all systems. The teaching of the **Upaniṣads** is known as **Vedānta**. Yoga, in its most general sense, means "the method of spiritual realization". Generally speaking, Yoga is **Vedānta in** its applied form.

Phoenix: *Is it quite correct to say that the members of the Order are 'devotees' of Ramakrishna? Because, it seems that they are more rational, more inclined to the path of knowledge.* ***jñāna, rather*** *than to the path of devotion, bhakti.*

Swamiji: Both are included. Ramakrishna himself was a combination of *Jñāna* (knowledge), *Bhakti* (devotion), *Karma* (action). ... everything. He lived it and encouraged it in others also.

Phoenix: *During the retreat, you have said that the object of life,* ***according to the Upaniṣads, is the attainment of knowledge. What*** *kind of knowledge?*

Swamiji: Any knowledge. The aim is to gain knowledge through pleasure and pain which life brings to you. The mind must be yoked to squeeze knowledge out of experience. Only man can do this, because he has the ability to search. Animals do not seek knowledge. Animals live on the instinctive level, whereas man can rise to the level of conscious pursuit of knowledge.

Phoenix: ***But ultimately it is a particular kind of knowledge that we are looking for ...?***

Swamiji: That knowledge is both physical and superphysical.

Physical sciences, politics, economics ... are all knowledge. Ethics and religion are also knowledge. There is physical science and there is spiritual science. Both are knowledge, and man must seek. The first knowledge he seeks is always of the world. Later on, maturity comes and then he seeks what life is all about above the physical level.

Phoenix: *Can we ever achieve any measure of spiritual awareness through the pursuit of physical knowledge?*

Swamiji: If you don't make a gulf between the two, this pursuit itself will lead you to the awareness of something higher. Because all you are able to get is indefinite information, inconclusive; fundamental questions arise, as it is happening in science today. Knowledge of the physical world leads you to the knowledge of something non-physical, transcendental. Knowledge is a continuous expansion of awareness of reality. At first, it is a surface reality and later, a deeper reality. First,you know yourself as a body; then you get the deeper knowledge of yourself as a soul. Secular and sacred are both part of God. All knowledge is sacred. Because, the universe is nothing but the expression of the Divine. That is the first utterance in the *Īśopaniṣad*. When you see through to the very heart of things. you find nothing but God. On the surface level, you see molecules, atoms etc., but when you go deep, there is nothing but Pure Consciousness, the *essence* of everything; that is the Atman, that is Brahman—the words used in the Upaniṣads.

Phoenix: *Would you, then, say, that university education is a hindrance or a help on the spiritual path?*

Swamiji: It is a help, provided it is put in its place in a positive way. It is good if you can end your formal education with the awareness that the knowledge gained is only so much, that there are other, still unknown areas, and that one must search for them. But if your education ends as something self-sufficient, with nothing more and above that, only to make money, then it is very insufficient. It depends on the attitude.

We always find that you know one subject, then another subject opens up, with new data. One must be able to rise to it. Knowledge gradually goes deeper, from physical, through mental, to spiritual.

Knowledge of physiology is great knowledge; but knowledge of neurology is better; knowledge of psychology is still deeper; and finally, knowledge of the Ātman (the Self) is the deepest. One must lead to the other. We should not get stuck at the body level.

Phoenix: *What about atheists? Surely their attitude is different.*

Swamiji: Nobody can be truly an atheist, according to Advaita. When you deny God, you are actually denying something external, a concept. You cannot deny your own Self ... and that is the real God. So, there are no real atheists, except those who live at the organic level ignoring their own higher dimension. This is what Advaita says. Therefore, atheists were never persecuted in India, there never were any 'heretics'.

Phoenix: *Does Advaita really have such a sway over the whole of India?*

Swamiji: Oh yes! Advaita is really dominating the Indian mind, largely because of Śaṅkarācārya's tremendous prestige and intellectual appeal. Sometimes, however, Advaita becomes anti-Dvaita, anti-Bhakti, which was wrong; that is not true Advaita. Advaita is something very comprehensive. Śaṅkarācārya himself had a great place for bhakti (devotion) and all dualistic religions. Today, we are understanding Advaita in this comprehensive sense. It has a tremendous appeal to all non-sectarian thinking minds, including agnostics: Even a communist will respect Advaita.

Phoenix: *You know this from personal experience; I understand you have been in the Soviet Union. How did that come about?*

Swamiji: The University of Moscow invited me. I spoke there in 1977. I have been there earlier also, in 1961, when I visited other East European countries as well: Czechoslovakia and Poland. I was also in Cuba (1969) and Yugoslavia (1970).

Phoenix: *What was your impression of the Soviet Union, the attitude of the people?*

Swamiji: I found respect for Indian thought, and a great desire to understand our great books like the *Gītā*, the Upaniṣads, Tagore, Vivekananda, etc. There is nothing narrow-minded or anticommunist in them. We do not preach against communism. We may condemn the *violence* of the communist movement, but as a doctrine, as an ideal, we have nothing against it. And ***vice-versa.*** Only a church will fight another church. Since we are not a church but only a philosophy, we have no difficulty. Of course, they do not like the word religion, but it is only the word that is a problem; when you speak of the 'philosophy of life', they do not mind.

For example, they wanted me to speak on: *Swami Vivekananda: His Humanism.* Speaking on Humanism, I said: 'Modern Western Humanism is a beautiful philosophy. It has only one defect: it doesn't know man in depth. That is supplied in Vedānta. Man is essentially divine. When he manifests his divinity, his humanism becomes natural, spontaneous, and sustained. Then his humanism becomes natural, spontaneous, and sustained. Then laws help to make him moral. This is what we need in the world today. They liked that idea; it appealed to them immensely.

Phoenix: *How would you compare the West with the communist countries?*

Swamiji: Naturally, society is more free in the West compared to the more rigid communist countries. I say naturally because, in communist countries, the system is based on the preference of equality rather than freedom, whereas in the West they prefer freedom to equality.

But one thing that I saw in all the socialistic countries is that there is no vulgarity of life, no exploiting of sex, a perfect respect for woman, women being equal to men in professions, in high positions, everywhere,. I liked that very much.

Phoenix: *Swami Vivekananda often spoke against secrecy. And yet, it is said that many teachers had a secret teaching which they gave only to the qualified minority. Jesus, for example, spoke in parables to the masses, and explained the real meaning only to his twelve disciples.*

Swamiji: That is only an educator's attitude. When I speak to children, I speak through stories to illustrate ideas. When I speak to a post-graduate class, I can express my ideas more directly. So, it is purely an educational method. There is no secrecy in it. True religion has no secrecy; it is all open, in full daylight.

Phoenix: *But it is said that each religion has its esoteric side*

Swamiji: If the word esoteric is understood as meaning *sacred*, it is alright; but not *secret*. What is sacred need not be secret, and what is secret is not necessarily sacred. So, when we speak of esotericism, it is not secrecy that is emphasized, but a certain profundity, a sacredness, something that should not be thrown in a marketplace. Therefore, the teacher will explain things only to those who are capable of understanding; for others, it will have to be diluted. But there is no secrecy. Secrecy is always a power-mania. People feel they must keep their trade-secrets; that is how we get religions with secrets. They feel: 'If I disclose my secrets, I lose my power.' That is how certain teachers try to keep their disciples in constant control. That is not right. There is no power-mania in true religion. One should share with people whatever truth there is: those who can understand will understand; to others it will have to be explained in a simpler way. But no secrecy.

Phoenix: *What about the dangers on the path? Perhaps some things should be kept secret because they may be dangerous in the hands of ordinary people?*

Swamiji: Certain things cannot be given out immediately. A baby, for example, should not be given matches, because it will start experimenting with fire and may get hurt. This is purely wisdom in dealing with a human situation. But, generally, people keep secrets not because of this, but purely as a kind of trade-secret, in order to keep their dominance over others.

Buddha gave a wonderful example of openness. He did not keep anything in a 'closed fist', as they say. He invited people to hear his teaching and accept it only if it is rational, practical, and universal. People had to judge for themselves and absorb as much as they were able to.

Phoenix: *You yourself have this attitude of openness and universality. Is this a characteristic of the Ramakrishna Order as a whole?*

Swamiji: We believe that Truth is not the monopoly of any sect or group; it is universal and open to all. We do not want to quarrel with or criticize anyone, but to encourage more tolerance and understanding between people. We tend to accept everyone rather than to reject or condemn them. We want to work toward unity and peace. That is our main message.

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VEDĀNTA AND THE FUTURE OF MANKIND *

1. *Introduction*

I was out of India on my annual lecture tour for ten weeks, July-September. covering Holland, Belgium, U.S.A. (Marshfield, Philadelphia, Washington D. C., Columbus, Chicago, Ganges, Detroit, San Francisco, Hollywood, and Honolulu), Australia (Sydney, Canberra, New Castle, and Perth), and Singapore.

2. *A Firmer Conviction about the Human Relevance of Vedānta*

It was really a very stimulating tour giving me a firmer conviction that this great philosophy of Vedānta, which India has developed since ages, and has continued to reauthenticate down to our own times through a succession of great saints, sages, and thinkers, has a tremendous relevance for humanity everywhere. It is not some magic, some cheap mystery. It is a pure message of human growth, development, and fulfilment; it is a rational philosophy of full human unfoldment, human evolution. There is a science of it; there is a technique of it; and our country has produced two great books in the past which contain this science and this technique, namely, the Upaniṣads and *Bhagavad-Gītā,* besides a number of other books as well. And, in this modern age, our country has produced extraordinary personalities who lived and taught this great philosophy, such as Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, The Holy Mother Sarada Devi, and several others.

3. *Vedānta and the Indian People*

When I spoke on these themes to the people in the countries I visited, I found the impact of the message of this Vedānta to be tremendous. In India itself, I do not find its impact to the same measure, because our people think they know about it already, they are familiar with it already. But I am sorry to say that what our people think they know about it is largely a mass of confusion, a mass of magic and superstition. The purely spiritual and philosophical dimensions of Vedānta are known to only a few people in our country. The result is that, when our own people, living abroad, face the challenges of the modern age in those highly developed countries—the problem of preserving the values of their own cultural heritage and of getting inner strength and peace—and when they get an opportunity to hear about the pure philosophical and spiritual message of Vedānta unadulterated with magic and superstition, they also feel its impact immediately, and realize its tremendous implications for men and women everywhere in this modern age.

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* Based on the tape record of a public lecture given at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, on 14 October 1979

Such experiences I had in several places. I was in Australia this last August in connection with the Sydney Ramakrishna Vedānta Society's annual Vedānta retreat programme in August-September 1979. I went, on invitation, to the neighbouring city of New Castle, about 120 kms. from Sydney, where a small number of our people have settled, most of whom highly qualified people—engineers, doctors, surgeons, some with high international reputation. I spent a day with them, and several of them attended the public and parlour meetings at which I spoke on the message of the Upaniṣads, the *Gītā,* Sri Ramakrishna, and Swami Vivekananda; many of the things they heard were new to most of them. They have been devotedly following their Hindu religion, its *bhakti* and *bhajan,* with also its do's and don'ts, its myths and rituals, and even its magic and superstitions believed to form part of its simple piety; they wanted to preserve their Hindu religion and culture *as they understood it.* But they had also a feeling that that type of popular Hinduism might not be able to stand against the tremendous social and cultural pressures of this industrial and avowedly materialistic civilization around them.

We see how, even in our own country, we are having the same feeling of inadequacy to meet this modern challenge with the aid of only these aspects of our religion. But when they heard the exposition of this spiritual and philosophical dimensions of Vedānta, the reaction was positive and tremendous and instantaneous. One of the doctors stood up and said: 'What is the use of trying to express our feeling in words? We have heard something wonderful; we feel now the strength and relevance of our motherland's philosophy and spirituality of Vedānta.' Many expressed the desire to have the relevant books, and some expressed their keen desire to participate in the next week-end annual spiritual retreat, that will be organized by the Ramakrishna Vedānta Society of Sydney in August-September 1980.

4. *Vedānta and the Western People*

Now, all this is natural, and a mere getting back to one's own spiritual roots, with respect to our own people, whether within India or abroad. But in the case of the Western people, the subject is entirely new and the response also is tremendous, conscious, and immediate. Many of them have not heard any of these things before; the religion taught to them these few centuries did not permit rational inquiry and questioning; it emphasised man's innate depravity through original sin, with its sense of guilt, and salvation as a post-mortem acquisition. The modern spirit has revolted against all those notions; yet, the spiritual hunger of modern man remains, and remains unsatisfied, and grows keener as years pass, with no guidance to human life and as to where to turn for spiritual nourishment. Then, by chance, they listen to the Upaniṣads, and experience, with joy and satisfaction, the words and thoughts of this profound literature bursting upon them like bombshells!

I was teaching the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* in Holland this last July. Forty to fifty people and myself were living together in a weeklong Vedānta retreat in a beautifully set cultural hotel in Oosterbeek (east river), near the city of Arnhem, with the Rhine flowing behind. Most of them had with them copies of the Madras Ramakrishna Math's English word-for-word translation of this Upaniṣad. They consisted of doctors, professors, housewives, young students—in fact, a cross-section of the Dutch people, with one or two Indians also joining in. The response is indescribable, as the group listened, in deep attention, to my reading and translation and exposition of its majestic utterances such as (2.1 and 4):

Brahmavid āpnoti param: tadeṣābhyukktā;
satyaṁ, jñānam, anantaṁ brahma;

yo veda nihitaṁ guhayaṁ parame vyoman;
sośnute sarvān kāmān saha brahmaṇā vipaściteti. ...
yato vāco nivartante, aprāpya manasā saha;
ānandaṁ brahmano vidvān na bibheti kadācana—

'The knower of Brahman attains the Supreme; about that there is this great utterance: Brahman is Truth, pure Consciousness, and Infinity. Anyone who knows this truth, hidden in the cavity of one's own heart in its supreme infinite dimension, experiences all desires in and along with the wisdom of Brahman. ... '

'That from which speech, along with thought, recoils (unable to comprehend), knowing or experiencing that bliss of Brahman, one never experiences fear from any quarter.'

Truth is of the nature of pure Consciousness which is infinite in dimension, says the verse; and this truth is not something far away, high up in the sky, or outside the cosmos, but is close to you, is something ever present in the silent depths of your own soul. When you realise this truth, something great happens to you; you become blessed and fearless. God is not presented in Vedānta as a being sitting far away, outside the cosmos, like a magistrate, before whom man is to stand in awe and fear. He is your own infinite Self, the dearest of the dear—*tat etat preyaḥ, sarvasmāt asmat priyataraḥ,* the nearest of the near—*tad iha antike ca,* as some other Upaniṣads describe it. In a number of passages, the Upaniṣads summon man's attention to the truth of this profound mystery hiding within himself or herself; and emphasize that this truth has to be *realized;* that is the line of human growth, development, and fulfilment. That is a profound message addressed to all men and women and children everywhere; and the response, naturally, was instantaneous and tremendous.

On the other side of the globe, in Australia, we had, a month later, as mentioned earlier, a week-long Vedānta retreat held in the town of Leura, about 60 miles from Sydney, situated in the Blue Mountains, sounding analogous to India's Nilagiri in Tamilnadu, in a beautiful Ashrama built by an Australian couple, Mr. Peter and Mrs. Yvonne Malykke, who have given it the name: Ganeśa Ashrama. On entering it, you feel you are in a different world. With its chapel for holding meditation and study sessions, with its beautiful shrine adorned with an image of Ganeśa, the Hindu God of wisdom and success. and pictures of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda. Jesus, and Buddha, it breathes a spirit of holiness and peace.

5. *The Lion-roar of Vedānta in the Bṛhadāranyaka Upanisad*

The whole group of about 50 people, who came to attend the retreat, was deeply impressed by the atmosphere of the Ashrama. There they studied with me the text, with Saṅkarācārya's commentary, of one of the most important Upanisads) the one on which, in this very hall in Delhi, I had given three lectures in May 1979 namely, the *Bṛhadaraṇyaka Upanisad*. Among the many teachings which the book expounds, the most important is the truth of the innate freedom, dignity, purity, and glory of man as the Ātman, conveyed in many luminous passages by illumined sages, both women and men. Vivekananda had said: 'Let the lion of Vedanta roar, and the foxes of fear and hatred will fly to the holes!' It is that lion-roar that we get in this Upanisad. In one such roar, or *garjan,* of the *Vedanta kesari,* or lion of Vedānta, this Upaniṣad speaks of man, when he does not know this truth of his true nature, remaining and behaving like 'cattle to the gods'—*pasurevam sa devanam* (1.4.10):

> *Brahma vā idam agra āsīt; tat ātmānameva avet, ahaṁ brahmāsmi iti. Tasmāt tat sarvam abhavat. Tat yo devānāṁ pratyabudhyata, sa eva tat abhavat; tathā ṛṣiṇam; tatha manusyānam. Tat ha etat pasyan ṛṣirvamadevaḥ pratipede: aham manurabhavam, suryasceti.*
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> *Tadidam apyetarhi, ya evam veda, aham brahmasmi iti, sa idam sarvaṁ bhavati; tasya ha na devasca na abhūtyā īśate; atma hyesāṁ sa bhavati.*
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> *Atha yo anyam devatam upaste, anyo asau, anyo aham asmi iti, na sa veda; yatha pasurevam sa devanam.*
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> *Yathā ha vai bahavah pasavo manusyam bhuñjyuḥ, evam ekaikah puruṣo devan bhunakti; ekasmin eva paśau adīyamane apriyam bhavati; kimu bahusu.*
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> *Tasmat esāṁ tat na priyam, yat etat manusya vidyuḥ*—

'This universe was indeed Brahman in the beginning. It knew only Itself as; 'I am *Brahman*." Therefore It became all. And whoever among the gods knew It, also became That; and the same with sages, and the same with men. The sage Vamadeva, realizing this (Self) as that (Brahman), knew: 'I was Manu and the Sun.'

And to this day, whoever, in like manner, knows It as, 'I am Brahman,' becomes (one with) all this (universe). Even the gods cannot prevail against him, for he becomes their very Self.

'While he, who worships another god, thinking, 'he is one and I am another', does not know (the truth of the Self); he is like *a cattle to the gods*.

'Just as many cattle serve a man, so does each man serve the gods. Even if one cattle is taken away (by a tiger etc.), it causes anguish; what then should one say if many (animals are taken away)?

'Therefore, it is not to their (gods') liking that men should know this (truth of the Atman).'

A flock of sheep is the property of the shepherd; so also men and women, who live at the organic level, are the properties of nature's unseen powers; they are *creatures,* they are helpless; 'But why do you remain so?', asks the Upanisad of all such people, and answers: Because you do not realize your own true Self, which is the source of all strength and fearlessness and the true focus of your freedom and dignity; even a fraction of that knowledge will make you free and fearless.' So, the Upaniṣad exhorts us not to remain as mere cattle to the gods. *Pasu,* i.e., cattle, of the *devas*. i.e., gods; that is the language used; it signifies the status of creatureliness and helplessness. You can overcome this creatureliness, a little, through the knowledge of the external world, which is physical science, but completely, only through the science of spirituality, *adhyatma vidya,* says Vedānta.

Creatureliness, helplessness, or unfulfilment, is a characteristic even of all societies highly advanced in physical science, technology, and material wealth. True freedom, which signifies the complete overcoming of this state of creatureliness, is achieved only through the realization of one's true nature as the *nitya-śuddha-buddha-mukta-svabhava-paramatman*— 'of the nature of ever pure, ever awake, and ever free supreme Self', says Vedānta; this realization removes at once all obstructions to one's freedom from thraldom to nature, external and internal, and nature's unseen powers, and the gods; because man then realizes himself as free and as the Self of all these. In ancient times, the great sage Vamadeva realized this profound truth of Ātman and, with this realization, he realized his oneness with all, with Manu, the great Hindu law-giver, and *Surya*, i.e., the sun, etc. Sankaracarya's comments on this passage are revealing:

> *Even before the realization of Brahman, everyone, being Brahman, is really always identical with all:* but ignorance superimposes on him the idea that he is not Brahman, and not one with the all. ...
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> 'Someone may think that the gods, who are great, attained this identity with all through the knowledge of Brahman, because of their extraordinary power; but those of this age, particularly men, can never attain it owing to their limited power.
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> 'In order to remove this notion, the text says: 'And to this day whoever, ... in like manner, knows It, ... i.e., his own Self, as, 'I am Brahman, ... becomes all this.'
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> *'For there is no difference as regards Brahman, or the knowledge of It, between giants like Vamadeva and the human weaklings of today! ...*
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> 'It is reasonable to suppose that the gods, in order to maintain their livelihood, may hinder men, who are dependent, from attaining immortality, as creditors do with their debtors. The gods also protect their cattle like their own bodies, for the *Śruti* (the Upaniṣads) will show that each man being equivalent to many cattle, the gods have a great source of livelihood in the rituals performed by him. It will presently be stated: "Therefore it is not liked by them that men should know this (truth). ..." From the mention of dislike and safety, we understand that the gods think, that when a man attains the knowledge of Brahman, he will cease to be their object of enjoyment and their cattle, *for his dependence will end*. Therefore, the gods may very well hinder a prospective knower of Brahman from attaining the results of the knowledge of Brahman, for they are powerful also. ...

'Since it is so, therefore, the gods can thwart, as well as help, an ignorant man. This is being shown: As in the world, "many animals," such as cows or horses, "serve a man", their owner and controller, "so does each ignorant man" equivalent to many animals, "serve the gods." This last word is suggestive of ancestral spirits *(pitṛs)* as well. He *thinks:* "This Indra and the other gods are different from me and are my masters. I shall worship them, like a servant, through praises, salutations, sacrifices, etc., and shall attain, as results, prosperity and liberation granted by them. Now, in the world, "even if one animal", of a man possessing many such, "is taken away", seized by a tiger, for instance, "it causes great anguish". Similarly, what is there to wonder at, if the gods feel mortified when a man, equivalent to many animals, *gets rid of the idea that he is their creature,* as when a householder is robbed of many animals? "Therefore it is not liked by them", these gods—What? "that men should", somehow, "know this", the truth of the identity of the self and Brahman.'

6. *The Vedantic Message of Human Freedom and Dignity*

So far as the truth of the Atman is concerned, and the truth of man's capacity to *realize It is* ***concerned, there is no difference between giants like Vamadeva and the human weaklings of today!*** **What a bold proclamation of the glory of man is this by Vedanta, that this** realization is **the birthright of every human being. Nature has given man the organic capacity to seek** and realize this **truth; only we must reckon with it. But mostly we neglect it, we ignore it. That has to be avoided, say the Upanisads.**

This whole passage of the Upaniṣad has close reference also to interhuman relationships, such as between master and servant, rich aristocrats and helpless and ignorant tenants, powerful capitalists and exploited workers. The former do not like the rising of the latter in education and economic opportunities, and thwart them at every opportunity, such as like the Tory opposition in the British Parliament, in the nineteenth century, against the introduction of universal primary education, with the remark: 'If the masses are educated, who will serve us?' But with the awakening of knowledge and faith in oneself, and the sense of equality arising from awareness of democratic citizenship, *the masses shed their creatureliness,* *helplessness, dependence, and fear, and realize the dignity and stature of their inherent manliness and womanliness, their inalienable humanity, and their freedom.*

This is Vedānta as applied to the social situation. Addressing the large Madras audience in 1897 on *The Future of India,* Swami Vivekananda uttered these powerful words in this connection (*Complete Works,* Vol. III, pp. 294, 297):

> 'The days of exclusive privileges and exclusive claims are gone, gone for ever from the soil of India. ...
>
> 'The duty of every aristocracy is to dig its own grave; and the sooner it does so, the better. The more it delays, the more it will fester, and the worse death it will die.'

When such passages of the Upaniṣads and Vivekananda literature are read and explained, the experience of the audience is just like bursting of bomb-shells in their midst. Sage Yājñavalkya's discourse to his wife Maitreyı and the great debate between Gārgī, the bold woman philosopher, and Yājñavalkya, in the court of Emperor Janaka, were other passages from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* which had similar impact on the listeners. These are high philosophical and spiritual passages of intense relevance to every human being everywhere, because the truth about the real man behind the apparent man is expounded in them.

7. *Theism and Atheism in the Light of Vedānta*

How little do we know about man, about ourselves! We know quite a good deal about this human body and its sensory system, and a little bit about the mind also, mostly as an extension of the sensory system. That is all what we know about ourselves. What we do not know is far more than what we know. How many possibilities are lying hidden in every one of us? *There is a science of human possibilities.* Vedānta developed its philosophy not only as a science of the cosmos, but also as a science of man, as a science of human possibilities, and synthesized both in a unitary vision. When you say you cannot do or achieve something, you are saying something without knowing what enormous possibilities are there within you. Vivekananda therefore said that, when ethnical monotheistic religions define an atheist as one who does not believe in an extra-cosmic god sitting far away in the sky, Vedānta defines an atheist as one who does not believe in himself. The first one sounds hollow because many have denied that god, and got away easily with it, except from the persecutions of militant and intolerant churches and other religious organizations upholding that god. Men and women all over the world have installed kings as a source of sovereignty, power, and beneficence, external to themselves; they have stood before them in fear, trembling; they have obeyed them as loyal subjects; and they have paid them their hard-earned wealth as tributes. But they have also rebelled against them; they have dethroned them; and they have also sometimes cut off their heads; and they have proclaimed their own inalienable independence and sovereignty as free citizens of a free state, when they were inspired by republican and democratic philosophies. Sovereigns come and go, but sovereignty remains. Many gods are dead; but long live God! who is the One Self in all beings and in all nature, about whose truth and glory the *Kaṭha Upanisad* sings (5.12-13):

Eko vaśī sarvabhūtāntarātmā
ekaṁ rūpam bahudhā yaḥ karoti;
Tamātmasthāṁ ye' nupaśyantı dhīrāḥ
teṣāṁ sukham śāśvataṁ netareṣām—

'The one controller and regulator, the inner Self of all beings, who, though one, assumes diverse forms; those wise ones who realize Him as ever established in one's own heart, to them belongs eternal happiness, and unto none else.'

Nityo' nityānāṁ cetenaḥ cetananam
eko bahūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān;
Tamatmastham ye'nupasyanti dhīraḥ
teṣāṁ śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣam—

'The Eternal among the non-eternals, the one Life in all that live, who, though one, fulfils the desires of the many; the wise ones who realize Him as ever established in one's own heart, to them belongs eternal peace, and unto none else.'

Thus, these gods, considered as external to man, *anyo'sau anyoham,* as expressed in the passage of the *Bṛhadaraṇyaka Upanışad* quoted earlier, have been enthroned and dethroned again and again. But the infinite Self of man, the pure shining truth within him, does not depend upon any one's affirmation or negation, cannot be affected by anyone's enthroning or dethroning; He is infinite and non-dual, and is your own true nature. That great teaching of the Upaniṣads, particularly of the *Chāndogya* and the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka,* stands as the shining sun of Truth dispelling all darkness of ignorance and weakness, fear and hatred. When that teaching is presented before people, who are tired of irrational dogmas and are in search of truth, and also presented in rational terms which you can question, which you can discuss, which you can inquire into, and which you can experiment with and experience—not as something just to be believed in—you can imagine the tremendous response of the truth-seeking and truth-sensitive human mind and heart.

8. *Tat Tvam Asi*

That little formula, *Tat tvam asi*—'That thou art'—of the *chāndogya Upaniṣad,* conveys the profoundest truth about man, lying at the deepest level of his being. It tells man: you are not this tiny organic system, this little body with its 150 or 200 pounds of weight; there is a profound divine dimension within you beyond your physical, neurological, and psychic dimensions, That truth has to be realized by man, the truth of *Tat tvam asi.* It is a *truth* and not an *opinion;* it is the product of a *vastu-tantra-jñāna,* and not of any *puruṣa-tantra-jñāna,*—knowledge based on the *vastu,* existing fact, and not knowledge based on changing human moods and predilections, as explained by Śaṅkaracarya in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtras.* This is the strength and strength-giving nature of Vedānta. This Vedānta was for long lying hidden in books, hidden in forests, monasteries, caves, and was treated as *rahasya,* i.e., secret or mystery; only selected people could handle it. That was its status all these thousands of years. Then came the great Śaṅkaracarya in the eighth century after Christ; he opened up this vast reservoir of knowledge and strength through his luminous commentaries on the principal Upaniṣads, ten or twelve in number, so that more people could read them and benefit from them. Even then, only a few came in touch with them.

But today, in this amazing modern age, this tremendous philosophy is becoming available to vast masses of human beings everywhere in the world. And when people come to know it, they experience the inherent glory, the dignity, the worth, and the strength of man, in a way never experienced before; they are drawn to it, *and feel impelled to experiment with its truth in the laboratory of their life*. They feel that it is worth trying to know what are the energies hidden within them—not merely the muscular, not merely the intellectual, but what lie deeper still. When I say, 'I cannot,' in any situation, I depend upon my tiny body and flimsy mind for that judgement. If only I know that there is a deeper and vaster energy resource hidden within me, I will never say 'I cannot'. Therefore it was that Swami Vivekananda said, as referred to earlier: That is atheism, not what denies an extra-cosmic god, but which says 'I cannot'; and that is true theism, not what affirms a pious belief in such a god, but what makes you dare say 'I can'.

By such positive attitudes, you affirm the ever-present God that is within you, and draw new energies from that inexhaustible source, like the finite quantum particle from the infinite quantum field-energy source, in modern physics. Vedanta whispers the truth of that great formula of the Upanisads into your ears and mind: *Tat tvam asi*, so that the whole of life becomes a gradual unfoldment of the infinite possibilities hidden in every one of us. Where do we stop in this great march? We can stop at any point of this momentous journey to truth and fulfilment, but only to take breath, and not to linger and languish on the way; all stagnation is to be avoided; rest for a while, if you need to, take breath, and continue the march again, as we do in high mountain-climbing. Accordingly, *the Katha Upanisad* sounds the clarion call of all Vedānta (3.14): *Uttisthata! Jagrata! prāpya varan nibodhata*—'Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached,' as freely rendered by Vivekananda, the paragon of Vedāntic teachers of the modern age as eulogized by his contemporary, the American philosopher William James.

9. *Static Piety* versus *Dynamic Spirituality*

Vedanta presents human life as a long march to truth and fulfilment, a march towards the highest and best hidden within all of us. Literally translated, the above line means: 'Arise, Awake, and, approaching the great sages, enlighten yourself.' This truth is your birthright; you have not to borrow it or beg for it; you have only just to realize it for yourself, in the context of the life you live and the work you do, in the midst of the earning of your living, the rearing of your family, and all the other things that you do in life. These can become a fitting external venue for this tremendous internal march of man to truth and fulfilment. This is true human evolution, says Vedānta. This is the robust philosophy taught by the Upaniṣads, by the Gītā, and by Buddha, in the past, and by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, in the modern age.

Many of us never knew about these wonderful and strengthening truths of our philosophy all these centuries, even in our own country. Please ask yourself as to what you know about your Hindu religion? The honest answer mostly will be: We go to a temple, ring a bell, get some rituals performed, of course chattering all the time, get some *prasād,* or sacred offering, and return back! There are some, even intellectuals among them, who will go to holy Rishikesh, pay five rupees to a priest, touch the tail of a cow, hoping to go to heaven thereby! How can such understanding and practice of religion help us today? How can such practices make for spiritual strength and human growth? If you go to the temple and perform some rituals, do so with a view to achieving at least one step of this long road of human evolution, of this human unfoldment, of this spiritual growth. We have never tried till now to orient our *religious life* in this healthy and dynamic way. Neither did we try to orient our *daily secular life* and *work* in that high direction. We were content with a static piety, or, as I prefer to term it, with a *piety-fringed worldliness*. We can well visualize that, when such an orientation becomes the life-endeavour of our people, when we go in for a dynamic spirituality, as offered by Vedānta, in place of our static piety, what tremendous spiritual strength will come to us, with its by-products of character-efficiency, love and humanistic impulse, dedication, and service! It will ensure the steady growth and development of man in our nation.

The human individual is physically limited but spiritually unlimited. What a beautiful conception it is! Physically we are all limited; it is good to be so limited; we do not belong to the species of the gigantic body-size in evolution. This limited measure of height and weight and size, nature chose for her unique product, man, after so many experiments, from tiny insects to gigantic dinosaurs. But within this tiny human system, nature has hidden many mysteries, many many treasures. *Treasure* is the word. Apart from the intellectual powers which have made man usher in this amazing space age, there is the infinite Self hidden within every one of us, says Vedānta. 'The great gem of *Rāma* have I obtained from within myself', proclaims the popular Hindi devotional song: *Rām ratan maine pāyo*. There are many such beautiful religious hymns and songs, behind which are profound spiritual and philosophical truths about man and God.

10. *Parā Vidyā and Aparā Vidyā*

We are all in search of many things in this world. At birth, as baby, we were in search of oxygen, for gaining which its lungs started functioning. That was our first search. Our brain could not have lived and functioned healthily if, in the first few seconds of birth, it did not get a bit of oxygen; such initial deprivation would have permanently damaged the brain. Our next search was for food, liquid, and solid; then came play, manipulation of things around, and free movement of limbs, to gain strength and to acquire knowledge of the external environment. Then came a momentous search—search for knowledge, through education, by which each of us transformed ourselves into what in Sanskrit is significantly called a *vidyārthi,* seeker of *vidyā,* or knowledge. Then came the search for a job, and the earning of money to satisfy our organic cravings; then came marriage and the rearing of a family and the enjoyment of its delights, and the participation in the collective social life as a citizen.

Thus we go on living our life. At some crucial time in the course of all these, our search takes on a new dimension—a search for knowledge of a higher dimension, a search as to what is my true nature. We continue as a *vidyārthi,* but an *arthi,* or seeker, of a *vidyā,* or knowledge, of a trans-sensual dimension. This is called *parā vidyā,* higher *vidyā,* and the earlier one is called *aparā vidyā,* ordinary *vidyā,* by the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad,* which defines *parā vidyā* as: *Yayā tadakṣaramadhigamyate*—'by which that reality which is imperishable is realized.' Then, and only then, when we reach out to this *parā vidyā,* do we realize the tremendous significance of the call of this Vedāntic truth of *tat tvam asi,* in its diverse *bhakti* and *jñāna* expressions, such as, we are devotees of the one indwelling God, we are children of immortality, *amṛtasya putrāḥ* we are the ever-free Ātman.

We have not fully grasped this truth yet, at that stage; but we have got intimations of it, and are lured by it; and everything else in life falls in line with this fundamental search for the profound truth hidden in us and beckoning us, in the context of which, and in the light of which, everything else in life, and all our actions, which had begun to be shadowy and meaningless, like a 'tale told by an idiot', in the words of Shakespeare, get a new meaning and significance—*yasmin tṛsargohyamṛṣā*—as the *Śrimad Bhāgavatam* expresses it in its majestic opening verse, as the zeros get value and significance when the figure one is placed behind them, as Śri Goswāmi Tulsidās and Śri Ramakrishna beautifully express it.

Life is a journey to fulfilment, says Vedānta. It is a two-fold journey, as described above in its *aparā vidyā* and *parā vidyā* aspects, the first one in the external world, the second one in the internal world, but yet in the context of that external journey itself. The second is a journey only in the figurative sense, since it is only an inward penetration, in knowledge and realization, to the centre of one's being, and not like the outward one in space and time. Understood in this light, all life becomes a great adventure, just like climbing the Himālayās, the stress and strain of which is more than compensated by the majesty and beauty and joy experienced.

11. *'Live in Saṁsāra, but don't Allow Saṁsāra to Live in You'*

This kind of teaching about human life and destiny was never given to us as the true meaning of religion, during the past few centuries. Religion was presented to us as a bundle of 'do's' and 'dont's', with many frightening restrictions and alluring post-mortem temptations. The idea that we can achieve the high and the higher and the highest in this very life was not stressed; that we can achieve mental and moral strength, develop ethical awareness and human concern, achieve work-efficiency and character-efficiency, and experience the maximum zest of life by steady spiritual growth and unfoldment—and all this in this very life, through understanding and applying the *buddhi yoga* philosophy of the *Gītā*—was not even thought of by most of our people.

But today, Vedānta, as preached by Swami Vivekananda, orients our minds in this very direction. In this very life, in this very world, we can realize the highest—that is what the Upaniṣads say, that is what the *Gītā* says, that is what Bhagavān Buddha says, again and again. In this very life, because the highest truth is already within us; *we have only to unfold it*. The whole of human education, secular as much as non-secular, becomes explained by Vedānta as a continuous process of unfoldment—the baby's innate powers getting steadily unfolded, manifested, expressed, through the two-fold education in *aparā vidyā* and *parā vidyā*. What a comprehensive and beautiful concept it is, both of *vidyā*, knowledge, and of *vidyārthi*, seeker of knowledge, i.e., student!

At birth, the human organism is very tender, weak, and flimsy; a little extra heat or cold can destroy a new-born baby. But slowly, its innate powers become unfolded. First, muscular strength comes to it, then nervous strength, followed by mental strength; it gains the power to crawl, to sit up, to walk, and finally, to run, and even to obtain Olympic championships, or to study, and to do research, and become a Nobel-prize-winning scientist. At every stage it gains new experiences of happiness and fulfilment. As the powers of its mind unfold steadily along with the powers of its body, it experiences newer and greater happiness and fulfilment. We can mark its joy when it learns to utter the first letter of the alphabet. In this way, we watch the child unfolding steadily the enormous possibilities hidden within it, becoming statesmen, scientists, artists, servants of humanity, sages, saints, and even divine incarnations. All these possibilities were there in the baby and they became unfolded; *and all this unfolding is education*, with its secular and religious dimensions forming the earlier and later phases of one and the same process of human growth and development and fulfilment.

There is no gulf or break between the two, except what a tired mind makes for himself or herself. Some may stop at the first dimension and stagnate at the organic level; this stagnation at the organic level is alone called *saṁsāra*, or worldliness; and the one who so stagnates is alone known as the *saṁsārin*, the worldly individual; some others may dare to continue the march and the climb, and thus cease to be *saṁsārins,* though living in *saṁsāra,* or the world. In the illuminating words of Sri Ramakrishna:

> Living in *saṁsāra* is not the same as being a *saṁsārin*; live in *saṁsāra,* there is no harm in it; but don't allow *saṁsāra,* i.e., worldliness, to live in you. That will arrest your further unfoldment beyond your organically conditioned and limited ego, and make you stagnant, uncreative, under the weight of selfishness, meanness, exploitation, and violence. A boat will be on the water; that is the right place for the boat. But water should not be allowed in the boat; that is the wrong place for the water; for it will make the boat stagnant and unfit for the purpose for which it is meant.

12. *Truth-seeking is like Mountain-climbing*

It is up to each individual to choose to grow or to vegetate, to be creative or to be stagnant. Just as, among mountain climbers, some are satisfied with reaching the top of minor peaks, while others dare to climb the higher peaks, and some few even the Mount Everest itself. To the daring, whether in mountain climbing or in the adventure of truth-seeking, every unclimbed peak is a challenge. That is the way of the free and the fresh and the heroic human spirit. Vedānta summons every human being to march on, and not to stagnate. There are great peaks of human growth to conquer, and every such peak conquered adds fresh energy resources to you, imparts greater and purer joys and delights to your life. The whole of Vedānta is presented today in this light by Swami Vivekananda. Decades hence, he will be gratefully remembered as the one teacher who brought the blessing of Vedānta to the level of the factory workers, the peasants, the housewives, and the little children. The scope of Vedānta has thus been made infinitely wide. This kind of teaching will give us a new refreshing and courageous outlook, banishing *the fear of being spiritual,* destroying *the allergy to being religious,* removing the shyness in owning oneself as a *bhakta or devotee of God*—a fear and an allergy and a shyness so common among many people today, especially the intellectuals. There will be no such thing as atheism thereafter, because the teaching is not about a god sitting in the sky, or about a salvation after death, but it is about human beings manifesting the divinity already in them. As the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* puts it (3.12):

Eṣa sarveṣu bhūteṣu
gūḍho ātmā na prakāśate;
Dṛśyate tvagryayā buddhyā
sūksmayā sūksma darśibhiḥ—

'This Ātman is present in every being, but being hidden, does not manifest (Itself); but It can be realized by the one-pointed *buddhi*, i.e., reason, of the subtle ones who have trained their reason to perceive subtle truths.'

It is *hidden* in the inmost soul of man; but man can *discover* It, manifest It. When our *buddhi,* or reason, becomes sharp by its continual training in the handling of subtler and subtler truths, it develops the capacity to realize the subtlest of all truths, namely, the Ātman, the infinite field-energy of *cit,* or pure Consciousness, behind man and the universe. *And this is the climbing of the Mount Everest of Experience.* And the teachers of Vedānta say 'god-speed to you', to every such climber, in the words of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (2.2.6):

Svasti vaḥ pārāya
tamasah parastāt—

'May good betide you in your effort to cross to the other shore of the ocean of darkness (of ignorance)!'

13. *Search for Knowledge compared to Igniting a matchstick*

When I spoke in Australia on this subject, I referred to what Sri Ramakrishna had said to illumine it with an example. He compared this hidden truth of God in all of us to the fire hidden in a matchstick. The ignorant man protests against this teaching, saying he is not able to find any God within him or without. This is exactly what a child will say with respect to the presence of fire in a matchstick. Tell your child to bring a match box. You take out one stick and tell him there is fire in that stick. 'No, there is no fire in the stick', he will vehemently say, after touching it and finding it cold. You still say, 'yes, there *is* fire in that stick.' Exactly in the same way, the Upaniṣad confidently says, 'there *is* the Ātman in every one, but it is hidden, not manifest to our senses.' You can confidently tell your child that fire *is* present in everything; but it is particularly present in a matchstick, because you are sure that you are conveying an ascertained truth. Like fire hidden in a matchstick, is the Ātman hidden in all of us. If the child protests that he or she does not see or feel the presence of fire in the matchstick, you can tell the child emphatically that fire *is* present in it, only it is not manifest *to your sense organs,* but that if you only strike the matchstick on one side of the match box, the fire will become manifest even to your senses. Then the child strikes the matchstick and the fire becomes manifest, to the great joy of the child, and it learns the truth that it was there all the time, but only *gūḍha,* hidden, and therefore only, *na prakāśate,* not manifest, but also, *drsyate, can be made manifest.*

That is a beautiful idea; strike the matchstick and the fire, ever present within it, comes out. Similarly, the whole process of education, secular or spiritual, is to strike the fire of knowledge ever present in the child. Don't you see today our masses, our rural people, who had no education for centuries, who never knew their own inherent strength, their own inherent energy resources, and remaining utterly helpless thereby, when they go to school and get even a little of ordinary education, elementary education, what a change begins to come upon them! What faith in themselves, what strength of mind, what confident grip on their external environment begins slowly to manifest in them, as some of their hidden powers get unfolded through education!

It is that striking, that igniting, that our schooling and our daily life and work processes, all of which constitute, should be understood as constituting, our education, should be transformed into. *with the help of an adequate philosophy of life.* It is thus that we become capable of meeting new challenges, of carrying heavier life burdens, naturally, spontaneously, and cheerfully, with the strength of the increasing energy resources that such education, and its by-product of a steady spiritual growth, brings to us.

But Sri Ramakrishna warns us that we should take note of a second important truth in connection with this truth of the inherent divinity in man and the inherent fire that is in the matchstick. That second truth is that the matchstick should be dry, and not wet, to achieve a successful demonstration of the truth to the child. If your child brought a wet matchstick, struck it, and found no fire coming out, it can retort to you that you are facile and wrong, that its sensory non-confirmation of fire in the matchstick is correct. The child must be made to grasp the truth that that one condition, that the matchstick must be dry, must be satisfied, if that truth of the presence of fire in it is to be demonstrated; otherwise, you will be only wasting that matchstick, or a whole box of such matchsticks, without verifying that truth. That does not mean that fire is not there, but only that certain necessary conditions were not satisfied.

Similarly, the light and fire of the ever-present Atman within man cannot be ignited unless certain conditions are satisfied. All these conditions are unified in one single value in the science of spirituality, namely, purity of heart. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall *see* God', says Jesus. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* expresses it in a great verse (3.1.5):

Satyena labhyastapasā hyeṣa ātmā
saṁyagjñānena brahmacharyeṇa nityam;
Antaḥsarīrejyotlmayo hi subhro
yam paśyanti yatayaḥ kṣīṇadoṣāḥ—

'This Atman is attained through constant search and practice of truth, self-discipline, right knowledge, and *brahmacarya* or self-control; spiritual seekers, who are pure and free from all evils, verily realize Him, the luminous and the pure one, within their own bodies.'

14. *Vedānta and Human Management*

I said before that like the striking of the matchstick against the matchbox to bring out the fire hidden within it, is the acquisition of knowledge by man. What is this striking with respect to man? It is man's interactions with nature and with the society of other human beings around, on the one hand, and interactions among forces within the internal nature of man himself, on the other. Efficient handling of these, under the guidance of an adequate philosophy of life, makes for character-strength, efficiency, and steady spiritual growth and fulfilment: inefficient handling of these, under the guidance of a cheap surface philosophy of life, results in a distorted psyche and a deficient character; but, with no philosophy to guide, and leaving the forces to function in an *ad hoc* manner, makes for the stagnation of creatureliness at the sensate level.

These human interactions can affect beneficially, or adversely, not only oneself, but also the other human beings covered by the interaction processes. This Vedāntic truth is particularly relevant in the diverse fields of human management, whether in the limited circle of the family, or in the wider circle of government, industry, business, and teacher-student relationships. Efficient handling of the interaction processes in these diverse human situations results, like the striking of the matchstick, in the bringing out of the best out of the other human beings; inefficient handling, on the other hand, results in bringing out of the worst in the other individuals. Parents' handling of children or husband's handling of wife, and *vice versa*, may bring out the best, or the nastiest, out of the other person. Government's handling of the people can bring out the best out of them, or the nastiest out of them. The same with respect to industry, business, and education. Efficiency or inefficiency in all such cases of human interactions depends, respectively, upon the presence or absence of, what the *Gītā* calls *buddhi*, or, enlightened and disciplined reason and will. Therefore the *Gītā's* exhortation to man is: *buddhau śaraṇam anviccha*—'take refuge in *buddhi*', evolve *buddhi* out of your psycho-neural energies and make that *buddhi* the guide of the chariot of your life, *vijñāna sārathi*, as the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* puts it in the beautiful chariot imagery of its third chapter.

It is faith in man that primarily helps to bring the best out of the other person; this depends upon having faith in oneself. Those who have no faith in themselves, can have no faith in others; these are the *cynics* in society who can never be a success in any field of human management. A cynic can be defined, in the words of Oscar Wilde, as one who knows the *price* of everything and the *value* of nothing! Such people cannot have the human touch; and all successful management, except in the context of the vilest of slave-master relationships, depends upon this human touch, this humanistic impulse. In a democratic context, all human managements become transformed, in the words of President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, (*Zambian Humanism*, pp.79-80), from power *over* people, which is *compulsion*, into power *with* people, which is persuasion, and *leading* people replaces *driving* them, and *governing* people does not degenerate into *enslaving* them.

15. *Intelligence versus Cleverness*

In the language of Vedānta and the Sāṇkhya-Yoga philosophy, when one is very *tamasic* in body and mind, one cannot feel, much less see, the presence of the Atman within; a little of Its presence is felt when one develops the quality of *rajas;* but it is only when one develops the quality of *sattva* that the manifestation of the Ātman in one's life becomes demonstrated. That change from *tamas* to *rajas,* and from *rajas* to *sattva* registers also a steady increase in ethical awareness, human sensitiveness, and spiritual freedom. The impure unethical individual, who is like the wet matchstick, has also the ever-pure infinite Atman as the soul of his soul; but It is *gūḍha,* and therefore, *na prakāsate,* 'hidden', and therefore, 'not manifest'.

The selfish people, the mean people, those who exploit and cheat others and think themselves clever and successful, can never feel the touch of the Ātman within them. Many animals are clever; but man is more clever than they, because he has an efficient cerebral system. And if man, in large numbers, endowed with such a versatile organ, considers himself or herself 'successful' by such use of the cerebral system, mistaking such cleverness and crookedness for intelligence, there is only a dismal future for mankind. 'Clever' means all what we mean by the word *cālāki,* in Hindi. If our education will make us only develop *cālāki,* mankind's future is dismal, very, very dismal indeed! We shall then cheat each other, and destroy each other. Vivekananda had said that, when we were in a cannibalistic state of culture, we killed and ate each other; but now that we are in an educated and civilised state, we do not *eat* each other, but we *cheat* each other! We have yet to decide whether it is better to eat each other than to cheat each other, and *vice-versa*! All this eating or cheating each other will continue as long as we live at our organic level, as long as we understand ourselves as merely an organic system seeking organic satisfactions, and use our very efficient science and technology to give us increasing opportunities for such satisfactions.

16. *The Poor versus the Poverty-stricken*

That is the human challenge today. If I use the word science and technology in the sense of *physical* science and *physical* technology, then this never-ending mutual chasing of organic cravings and organic satisfactions will result in reducing the human situation into a tragically 'short, nasty, and brutish', condition, to use the famous words of Thomas Hobbes. We see the phenomenal increase of crime decade after decade. Behind all the crime and drug and sex explosions currently rocking our civilization, there is unsatisfied craving, and dissatisfactions arising from unchecked cravings, and the absence of a seeking for higher values. This is the reason why so many criminals come out of the educated and the well-to-do sections of society. Really, people, poor in pocket, are not so criminal, not so psychically distorted, as people poor in heart. *One is the poor* and *the other is the poverty-stricken*. Many virtues and graces, and the quality of humanness itself, missing in the latter, are found in the former. Poet-king Bhartṛhari's famous words in his *Vairāgya-śatakam* illumine the current tragic situation (verse 53):

Sa tu bhavatu daridro yasya tṛṣṇā viśālā
manasi ca parituste ko'rthavān ko daridrah—

'He indeed is *daridra*, poverty-stricken, whose sense-cravings are vast, endless; but when the mind is happily contented, who is the rich one, who the poor?'

When my cravings are endless and my honest earnings are not enough to satisfy them, I become poverty-stricken and a thief, I am led to become a criminal, and I have to rob somebody. Most of the wayside robberies and other similar crimes in the Western countries, and, now, in our own country also, and most of the cheatings, are done by people whose cravings are vast and endless. They have not learnt to discipline their sense organs and mind, crime is the only way left for them. Our own capital city, this Delhi, has become the most unsafe place in India today, because there is a proliferation of such people here. Many of them are educated young boys and girls; yes, girls also are among them. They are out to rob or even kill anyone; they have no compassion; they become just beasts of prey; and they make a beautiful city unsafe for the rest of the people. That is why such a tragic situation is prevailing today.

This morning, I was driving over the ridge towards the Delhi University; I found the forest scene on the ridge more beautiful now than when I was here in the fifties, with fine grass, flowering shrubs, and beautiful bowers, where you can peacefully enjoy an evening. But, unfortunately, you cannot enjoy there; somebody may rob or kill you. Then this thought came to me: What is the use of that beautiful park if you cannot peacefully enjoy it? That is also the situation today, in a more serious form, in the great city of New York with respect to its vast Central Park. That park was a great centre of human associations; but today nobody dares to go there, especially after sunset. You are sure to be mugged, violated, or even killed by some criminal. All this is occurring in various parts of the world, because of the wrong philosophy of man by which men and women live. I came across a book in the U. S. A. during my lecture tour in 1971-72 which said, among other things, that some decades ago, life in America was different from what it is today. Citizens moved freely about in the streets and parks, and criminals were put behind walls. But today, free people are behind walls and the criminals move about freely in the parks and streets!

17. *Criterion of Social Health according to the Mahābhārata*

This is becoming tragically true here in Delhi and in many other parts of India also. Is this civilization? Is this progress? Does this not reveal the ill-health of the political state and society? Let us listen to one of the verses in our great epic, the *Mahābhārata,* conveying our country's thinking about four thousand years ago, and giving the criterion of social health and of a well-governed political state. In the *ethics of the state,* or *rāja-dharma,* section of its *Śānti-parva,* Bhīṣma tells Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira (12.68.32, Bhandarkar edition):

Striyaścāpuruṣā mārgam
sarvālaṅkāra bhūṣitāḥ:
Nirbhayāḥ pratipadyante
yadā rakṣati bhūmipaḥ—

'If women, decorating themselves fully with ornaments, and without any men accompanying them, can go about freely and fearlessly through the streets and lanes (unmolested by anybody), that state is well-governed.'

What a wonderful definition of a civilized and well-governed state! But where are we today? In all parts of the world, where is that human security and safety? To bring about that social situation, we need to live by a philosophy of life different from the one by which humanity lives in modern civilization. *We have to get a* *glimpse of that shining nature of man, the Ātman, behind his organic system*. We go on extending our knowledge in the physical sciences, sociology, politics, economics, and modern psychology. And all this knowledge is currently oriented only to sharpen our animal appetites and to stifle the Divine within us; this knowledge does not help in the unfoldment of man, beyond his or her sensory and intellectual dimensions. But it is precisely there, beyond the sensory and intellectual dimensions, that all that is pure, lofty, strengthening, humanizing, and creative, lie. Expounding the many evils produced by man's thraldom to the senses and to the sense-bound mind, and the peace and social health and wellbeing arising from disciplining both, the *Mahābhārata*, in its discourse by the highly spiritual meat-seller, Dharmavyādha, to the Brāhmin ascetic Kauśika, says (*Vana parva*, 202, 16-21):

Indriyānyeva tat sarvam yat svarga-narakau ubhau;
Nigṛhīta-visṛṣṭāni svargāya narakāya ca—

'What are called heaven and hell, both are nothing but the senses; when (they are) controlled and disciplined, it is heaven, when (they are) let loose, it is hell.'

Eṣa yogavidhiḥ kṛtsno yāvadindriya-dhāraṇam;
Etan-mūlaṁ hi tapasah kṛtsnasya narakasya ca—

'The discipline of the senses is the sum total of the means ot (man's) attaining all spiritual advancement; its presence or absence is at the root of man's every experience of spiritual enrichment (which is heaven) and all hell (which is spiritual impoverishment).'

Indriyānāṁ prsaṅgena doṣamrcchatyasaṁśayam;
Saṁniyamya tu tānyeva tatah siddhim avāpnute—

'By indulging in them, (man) undoubtedly contracts all vices; when, on the other hand, they are controlled and regulated, (man) attains spiritual freedom and fulfilment.'

Ṣaṇṇām ātmani nityānām aiśvaryaṁ yo'dhigacchati;
Na sa pāpaih kuto'narthaih yujyate vijitendriyaḥ—

'The self-controlled person who has acquired mastery over the six senses (five sense organs and the sense-bound mind) within himself or herself, is tainted neither by sin nor by other evils.'

Rathaḥ sarīraṁ puruṣasya drstam
atma niyantā indriyānyāhurasvan;
Tairapramattah kusalī sadasvaih
dāntaiḥ sukham yāti rathiva dhīraḥ—

'Man's visible physical body is said to be like a chariot, his soul the controlling charioteer, and his senses the horses; the wise and efficient person, with his reason calm and unperturbed, rides in happiness (and peace) like a capable and un-inebriated driver controlling his disciplined horses.'

18. *Vivekananda and the First Bursting of the Vedanta Bombshell in the Modern Age*

The fruits of the wrong philosophy by which contemporary societies live, a crude type of materialism, point only to a dismal future for mankind. This is not a view held by me only, but by many modern thinkers as well. It is the prospect held out by such books as the one written by Rattray Tailor, published about 7 years ago, bearing even a frightening title: *The Biological Time Bomb!* It suggests that, by about 2050 A D., our human society will become like an animal farm and nothing else. It is against this bleak prospect that we have to view the majestic and luminous philosophy of Vedānta, and the significance of its profound study of man in depth, *which does not say 'no' to the physical cravings of man, which does not say 'no' to his intellectual aspirations either, but which merely exhorts man to go deeper and come in touch with, and unfold also, the purer, vaster, and more creative energy resources that lie within.* Its exhortation to man is: Continue your march; don't stop at the organic or the intellectual level. Manifest the divine dimension that is within you.

What a beautiful concept of man! Man at peace with himself, at peace with the world; man who has begun to manifest the Divine within, who can love his fellowmen and other beings, who can have compassion, and who can express these in moods and acts of helpfulness and service. That is a different type of man; and to produce him in millions is the great function of Vedānta in the modern age. Vivekananda took Vedānta from out of the inaccessible Himalayan forests and caves, from its inaccessible treasure chest, namely, the great Sanskrit language, and broadcast it far and wide, in the East and the West. That work commenced dramatically, yet unplanned, in the modern age, at Chicago in 1893, with the first bursting of the Vedānta bombshell at the World Parliament of Religions. What an efficient platform it was for bringing this luminous Vedāntic message to modern humanity! In ringing voice, he gave its redeeming message to that august world forum: You are all children of immortal bliss—*amṛtasya putrāḥ*. Try to manifest it. You are not children of sin, children of weakness, children of dull, dead matter. You are spirits free, eternal, and pure; matter is your servant, and not you the servant of matter!

That is how the Indian sages, ancient and modern, describe man and his possibilities. That message reached the modern West through Vivekananda. It was a powerful message. It had a tremendous appeal to the American mind. In fact, any human mind will feel the impact of that message, of that gospel, which means 'good news', that proclaims man's spiritual freedom and equality. That is why there was such a tremendous response from that vast and expectant Parliament audience. The presentation of that message was prefaced by him with five simple but pregnant words: *Sisters and Brothers of America,* words that instantaneously penetrated into, and touched, the hearts of the audience within the hall, that morning, and the hearts of millions of others without the hall as well, the next day, through glowing newspaper reports. And they have continued to reverberate through various countries, and pulse through millions of hearts, thereafter. Those words came out from the deep conviction, in the Swami's heart, about the Vedāntic truth of the spiritual oneness of all beings, of the truth of the One Divine Ātman in all. That truth is not revealed by the senses or the sense-bound mind, but by the mind which has emancipated itself from thraldom to the senses, and become pure, penetrating, and luminous. They were not formal empty words, but words that came from the depth of realization. That alone explains the tremendous response from the hearts of the thousands in the audience, the response of a two-minute deafening applause, and that too even before the speech of the speaker, who was a stranger, was started!

How many such great saints and sages, who have realized this truth of the spiritual oneness of all humanity, our country has produced from ancient times to this day! The teacher who imparted the immortal message of the greatest book of pure *bhakti,* namely, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam,* to Emperor Parikṣit of the *Mahābhārata* age, was Suka, the son of Vyasa. Even as a young boy, he had realized this truth. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* describes his spiritual eminence in this beautiful verse (I.2.2):

Yaṁ pravrajantam anupetam apeta kṛtyam
dvaipāyano viraha-kātara ājuhāva;
Putreti tanmayatayā taravo'bhineduḥ
taṁ sarva-bhūta-hṛdayaṁ munim ānato'smi—

‘When he (Śuka), renouncing, sense life, was going out as a wandering monk, even before undergoing the prescribed rituals as a boy, like investiture with the holy thread, his father Vyāsa, pained by separation from his offspring, called out to him: O my son! To this plaintive cry (of the father), sage Śuka, through the trees (and all nature), in a compassionate response, echoed his plaintive cry; I salute that sage, who has realized his onenesss with the heart of all beings ’

He was no foreigner to anything or anybody; he was one with all. What a beautiful conception! He, Śuka, had realized the one Self in all and had become spiritually one with all.

Similarly, in this modern period, a Vivekananda crosses the seas, goes to that great country, America, endowed with industrial strength, scientific efficiency, political power, and material prosperity. But something was missing; something within man which provides, in the words of Jesus, a rock foundation to human character and to human society, which no rain or flood or wind can shake or topple over. There, standing on that platform of the world's religious consciousness, when he conveyed this great Vedantic message of the Atman, it was like the bursting of a tremendous bombshell; and such burstings of bombshells of Vedantic ideas and inspiration continued throughout his four years' life in America, later in England, and finally here in India. Be free, you are always free, experience it, express it in life and action and in all inter-human relationships. Why remain narrow, bigoted, and small, why arrest your development and live at the level of petty loves and big hates, when you are heir to the infinite and the immortal? When you will have even a slight experience of the Atman, all pettiness and meanness will go, a largeness of mind and heart will set in.

19. *The Pathology of Human Meanness*

There is too much meanness in our human character today. Every department of human life in our country, be it politics, administration, business, education, and social life, is afflicted with this pathology of arrested human development. How much pathology of human meanness we find in our otherwise sacred and intimately human marriage relationship, reduced now to a coarse marriage market! 'Meanness' is the word to describe it. But those who are thus mean, the bridegroom or his father or mother, all of them often with university degrees and selected for high civil or military posts, who drive their young educated brides to desperation and to suicide by their heartless extortionate demands for more and more dowry, *do not realize that they are mean and petty,* that they have stifled their own higher nature; but they yet consider themselves very intelligent and clever! Their examples, as revealed in the numerous contributions to our journals like the one appearing in the illustrated article, entitled 'The Fatal Anguish', by Ramesh Khurana 'swapan' in the current October 1979 issue of the Monthly *Probe,* demonstrate vividly that our current so-called *higher* education is better called *costlier* education, when the product is not a *higher mind but a mean and a meaner mind.* In these, our nation is enacting a human tragedy too deep to be glossed over in complacency.

When our people realize, even a little, the Vedāntic truth of the real nature of man, *svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt,* as the *Gītā* assures man, a bit of real human greatness will come upon us, a greatness which is already imprinted within all, like the fire hidden in that matchstick. But today, in that low damp state, they strike the matchstick of their lives but no fire or light of knowledge and character comes out, and they doubt the truth of Vedānta. They hear lectures on Vedānta, read Vedānta and other religious books, go to *yogis* and *mahātmās,* but no Vedānta fire or light comes out of them, because the matchstick of their mind is very wet. It has to be made dry to manifest the fire and light within. These conditions have to be satisfied—a certain measure of hanker-ing for truth and character-excellence, a little capacity for clear thinking, a keen desire for unfolding the deep truth within, and opportunities to come in touch with the compassionate mother-hearts of such personalities like the Holy Mother Sarada Devi, who appeared in the modern age, as I often describe it, *'to convert every mother-in-law into a mother-in-love'!*

Then the first thing that will happen to them will be the ignition of this fire and light of self-knowledge, if not in a blaze, at least on a matchstick dimension, and the steady eradication of all meanness and pettymindedness, and the resulting tensions, peacelessness, suffering, and unfulfilment.

20. *Nutrition: Physical, Mental, and Spiritual*

So far as our country is concerned, Vivekananda said that, in this sphere, we are a people dying of thirst when the perennial *Gaṅgā* of Vedāntic wisdom is flowing nearby! I can understand people in other countries somewhat dying of such thirst, where this philosophy is not known or is not available easily. But here in our India, where we can have it freely and easily as the air around us, it is the greatest tragedy that we are, at present, spiritually speaking, the most starved of all nations. 'Starvation' is the correct word, resulting in ethical, moral, and spiritual malnutrition all round. The result is that nobody is happy. Everybody is blaming and cursing everybody else; every political and social group is cursing every other group. Even in day-to-day life, in the private citizen's life, we see this pathological condition. Losing faith in oneself, the husband blames and curses the wife; and, of course, the reverse also!

This tragic situation has come after long years of spiritual malnutrition. There is this spiritual malnutrition, besides the more obvious physical malnutrition, the latter affecting millions of our people below, the masses, the former affecting millions of our people above, the upper and middle classes. To combat the latter, we received, and are still receiving, international help, with which and with our own stepped-up food production, we are taking steps to remove the physical malnutrition of our children and of our weaker sections. We are also providing mental food to our millions through our expansive educational programmes. But, side by side, we have to attend to our people's, especially of our educated section's, spiritual malnutrition also. Referring to this vital need, Vivekananda had said in his lecture on *Vedānta and Its Application to Indian Life (Complete Works,* Vol.III, p.247):

> 'Bring all light into the world. Light, bring light! Let light come into every one; the task will not be finished till every one has reached the Lord.
>
> Bring light to the poor; and bring more light to the rich. for they require it more than the poor. Bring light to the ignorant, *and more light to the educated,* for the vanities of the education of our time are tremendous!'

21. *Human Evolution as Spiritual Growth*

Vedānta says that our country can become a heaven tomorrow, if a fraction of this kind of awakening to their own shining truth of the Ātman will come to our people. Let it find expression in all inter-human relationships, bringing with it the capacity to dig affections in each other, to enter into each other, to love and serve each other, and not to collide with each other, as people do now. This is the blessing of *Brahma-vidyā* or *Adhyātma-vidyā*. This is the meaning of the spiritual growth of man, the meaning of the evolution of man beyond his organic dimension. *It is psycho-social evolution and not mere organic evolution.* We have the best of physical equipment, this cerebral system. We do not need any new organ or organs; but we need to learn to use this unique cerebral organ of our system efficiently.

So today's biology tells us: Evolution at the human stage has become moral, ethical, aesthetic, and humanistic evolution. *Vedānta presents human evolution as spiritual growth.* In human evolution, man develops the capacity to send pulses of love and compassion to the world. Have you that pulse beating within you? That is also the language of biology today. That is also the language not only of Vedānta, but also of all pure religion—man growing spiritually. The little child growing also spiritually, along with its more palpable mental and physical growth. It loves other children; it serves other children; it does not hate or exploit or destroy other children and its own elders. What a beautiful conception of human evolution? Today, in this field, the highest thought of physical science is in harmony with the purest spiritual thought of Vedānta. When they reinforce each other, we get a profound and comprehensive philosophy of human growth, development, and fulfilment.

When this philosophy becomes universally known and applied, we can speak in hopeful terms about the future of mankind. Whatever may be the current maladies, whatever may be the dismal social situation around us, we may assure ourselves that these are only passing phases. There is enough wisdom and inspiration available in the world to take humanity on the road of man's spiritual growth. The scope of human growth is not exhausted in the economics of production and distribution, and in the consumption of material and mental goods and services. One may have plenty of these, and plenty of money to purchase them as well; but he or she may miss the experience of love and compassion, and the qualitative enrichment of life. What is the use of having only plenty of money? We speak of *Lakṣmī,* our beautiful goddess of fortune; it does not mean money only. It means money creatively used to enrich and beautify human life, to ensure human welfare. Money jealously hidden and protected under one's pillow is not *Lakṣmī.* That is dead money, mere possession, something inauspicious, i.e., *a-lakṣmī;* it does not produce joy or welfare. Money invested in human development is alone true *Lakṣmī.* The blessing of *Lakṣmī* confers on humanity a capacity to create and appreciate and enjoy wealth and beauty and goodness.

22. *Vedanta Says to Man: Don't Stagnate*

All these possibilities are hidden in all of us, and we have to actualize them in our life. When we began to understand *Lakshmi* to mean only dead wealth, or wealth acquired by human exploitation, and when we used it only for one's own organic satisfactions, we became truncated; we became stagnant. The words *stagnant* and *stagnation* are very important both in biological evolution and in Vedānta. Both exhort man: Do not be stagnant. Some species developed high specialization and became stagnant for millions of years, for example, certain insects. Similarly, human beings, individually or in groups, can and has become stagnant at organic level; no growth beyond that level was tried or achieved; that spells spiritual death. Such stagnation should not be allowed to happen. We may briefly rest on our way, as we do when we go on a long pilgrimage, or mountain climbing, but we wake up the next day and continue our march to our destination. That kind of rest on the way to our spiritual growth is not stagnation; it is the process of recouping only, followed by a more vigorous onward movement.

So, Vedānta says: Do not stagnate. That is the only warning it gives to man; do not convert wayside rest and sleep to death, but recoup and move on. Let the current of water flow; stagnant water is unhealthy; flowing water is pure and healthy. Human life must be a continuous movement to achieve higher and higher levels of unfoldment. Arrested and made stagnant at the sensate level, life ceases to be life and becomes death. *Today's human life all over the world shows the evil of such stagnation.* We have to stir up the waters of life, remove the clogging materials, and make it flow on as a healthy stream of human energy, revealing greater and greater dimensions of truth, beauty, and goodness.

That is the work of Vedānta all over the world. We do not speak of it as *religion* in the narrow sense of the word; we present it as the complete philosophy of life, as the science and technique of integrated human development. That is exactly the meaning and scope of the *Yoga* philosophy of the *Gītā*. 'All expansion is life; all contraction is death', Says Swami Vivekananda. When you contract, you die; your 'I' becomes limited. *I* must be happy; *I* must enjoy; *I* must have more money; *I* do not care for others; *I* shall squeeze every one else to my advantage. That is what is called contracting myself to a tiny limited ego controlled by the organic system; that is death and more death. The other is expansion; I expand myself beyond the organic limitations and develop compassion, love, and concern for others. That is true growth, that is true life and more life. And what a beautiful growth it is! This is what humanity has to achieve within India and outside India. Vedānta philosophy upholds this great possibility hidden in every human being. It is like a spring board uncoiling itself. There is vast energy coiled up in every one of us; in our mystical language, we speak of it as *Kuṇḍalinī,* the coiled up. In all life growth, that energy gets uncoiled, released. In a state of *tamas,* that energy remains coiled up. Man then becomes stagnant, a nuisance to himself and a problem to society. When that energy begins to stir, it rises to the state of *rajas;* man then becomes alive and vital, but it scatters as much evil around, as good. Then, finally, it is raised to the level of *sattva,* when all life energy becomes transformed into intense and dynamic goodness.

23. *Education and Religion as Ātma-vikāsa*

This is the direction of the uncoiling of the coiled-up energy in man. And the whole process of that uncoiling is what is meant by education, and also what is meant by religion, which is but continued education, according to Vedānta. Therefore, when you leave school and college, do not say to yourself that you have *completed* your education; you have completed only your *schooling,* your institutional education; at its best, it can give you the basic education by which, and from which, you can continue your education throughout your life and realize the fullest unfoldment of your possibilities. It is high time that we realize that education continues throughout life. Sri Ramakrishna said: 'As long as I live, so long do I learn'. When you understand education from that point of view, you realize that this concept of the spiritual growth of man becomes integrated with the other concepts of the physical and the intellectual growth of man. It is *ātma-vikasa* in its fullness. *Vikāsa* is the word for this human growth. It gives you the picture of a lotus bud or rose bud in the process of blossoming. When you show compassion, you are showing *ātma-vikasa;* when you love, do dedicated service, you are showing *ātma-vikasa.* The infinite Ātman is slowly manifesting in you. That is why Vivekananda gave the finest scientific definition of religion as 'the manifestation of the divinity already in man.' Proclaiming the glory of man as the Infinite Ātman, Swami Vivekananda says (*Complete works,* Vol II, p.250):

> 'No books, no scriptures, no science can ever imagine the glory of the Self that appears as man, the most glorious God that ever was, the only God that ever existed, exists, or ever will exist.'

And again (*ibid,* p.279):

> 'In worshipping God, we have always been worshipping our hidden Self'.

When you find your child showing love and compassion to other children, you mark this manifestation of his or her inherent divinity. When the child becomes self-centred and selfish, quarrelsome crying and demanding, that divine stands shut out. When its mother desires to go out, on personal work or pleasure, such a child will do everything to prevent her from going out; it wants her, and also the whole world, to be centred in itself, in its organic system, and the little self in it. But when a child says: 'Mother, please go; you have your own job to do or joys to achieve, I shall manage myself during your absence', you can mark the expansion of the self-concept in the child, and the manifestation of the divine within it. The child has learnt to *participate* in its mother's life, and not treat itself apart and make her dance around it all the time. In all such situations, we mark the onset of psychic maturity, the growth of the child as *individual* into the child as *person;* and that constitutes the index of spiritual growth. In this way, you can watch and stimulate the spiritual growth of children. We have to put every child on that long road of spiritual growth, as we are already doing much to put our children on the road of their physical and intellectual growth. This is the message of Vedānta.

Whether it is East or West, human problems are practically the same everywhere; conditions may be different, but the problems are the same. The message of Vedānta is also the same, namely, continual effort at the manifestation of the Divine within. Because of our life stagnation for the past few centuries, our people need to be continually reminded: Don't stagnate. Stagnation is the only evil to be avoided in life. Eating, drinking, search for pleasure, none of these is bad, in the eyes of Vedānta; but Vedānta will tell us constantly not to stagnate at any of those particular levels. Here is your child at home; you purchase toys for it; and it is busy with the toys. It is beautiful to see children playing with toys. You also may join them in the play; it will stimulate their joy in the play. But when you see that child grown up and with a big moustache, but never caring to rise to other relevant pursuits of life, but still continuing in its playing with toys, you see the tragedy of it and deplore its stagnation at that infantile level! Similarly, Vedānta feels the tragedy of man stagnant at the level of organic pleasures and satisfactions. And to all such people, Vedānta says: Don't stay ignorant of, and unwilling and unable to rise to, the higher levels of joys for which also you have the organic capacity. There are other heights of joys and delights to conquer; so move on, march on. What a beautiful picture of human life and excellence it presents!

The *Yajur-Veda* exhorts man to 'march on and march on!'-*caraiveti, caraiveti!* That is the refreshing attitude of Vedānta; that is its strength; that is also its intense human concern. It does not look down upon human pleasures, including the physical and the sensual; it never refers to them as the devil's play; it only exhorts man, as the father or the mother exhorts the child playing with toys, to finish with them and then go forward, go onward, purer and more intense joys are there for you to achieve. You may eat a tasty dinner and say: What a joy it is! Yes, it is true; it is a joy. But when you read a beautiful book, you get another type of joy. When you acquire a piece of knowledge, you get joy. When you see a beautiful piece of art, or produce one, or write a poem, you get joy. These are higher types of joys; sensory joys are of an ordinary type. We share them with the animals; but those higher joys are uniquely human. And men and women who fail to rise to those levels, but stagnate at the sensory level, have failed to achieve their humanness as well.

24. *Freedom of the Human Spirit*

But all these joys rise to their highest and purest and intensest level, when we realize the Divine that is within all. Life becomes most zestful at that level. The joy of spirituality is purer and more intense than the joy of intellectuality. So move on from joy to joy, and not from sorrow to joy, move on from truth to truth, and not from error to truth, is the great message of Vedānta.

Next week, we in India will be celebrating our annual festival of *dīpāvalī,* a festival of joy and a festival of lights. People take oil bath and have plenty of eating, particularly varieties of sweets, and children have fireworks, houses and business premises are tastefully lighted, and all have a joyous day. Once a year at least, we have a festival of joy. But the rest of the 364 days of the year are days of struggle and unhappiness in varying degrees to most people. But Vedānta asks: Why should such joy be ours only for one day in a year? Is it not possible to have joy and zest more often, nay, every day of the year? Every minute of our life? Can we not squeeze joy from every action of ours, and from every minute of our life? This is the sign of the freedom of the human spirit. Vedānta says that that is possible for every human being, if and when he or she realizes that his or her very nature is joy, *ānanda,* It is *sat, cit,* and *ānanda*—

existence, knowledge, and bliss; and that joys coming from external sense contacts are far inferior in quality and quantity, and are costly too in terms of money. And Vedānta measures human evolution by this criterion, namely, the less the dependence on external sources, the purer the joy level, the higher the life level, and the greater the experience of freedom (*Manu Smṛti,* IV. 160):

Sarvaṁ paravaśaṁ duḥkhaṁ
sarvam ātmavaśaṁ sukham;
Iti vidyāt samāsena
*lakṣanaṁ sukha-duḥkhayoḥ_*

'All external dependence is unhappiness, all dependence on oneself is happinees; in brief, know this to be the characteristic of happiness and unhappiness.'

If you read the lives of great saints and sages of every religion— Hindu, Christian, Islamic Sufi, Buddhist, Taoist, and Judaic, you will find a great fund of joy coming out of their lives; and they are able to impart their joy to others as well. You find the fullest expression of joy in the life of Sri Ramakrishna in our own time. He is the perfect demonstration of the truth of this beautiful Sanskrit verse of our tradition (*Pāṇḍava-Gītā*):

Nityotsavaṁ bgavatyeṣām
nitya śrī nitya maṅgalam;
Yeṣāṁ hṛdistho bhagavān
maṅgalāyatano hariḥ

'Life is a perpetual festival, a perpetual prosperity, and a perpetual auspiciousness to all those in whose heart is fully established the blessed *Hari,* (the Indwelling Self of all), who is the very abode of all auspiciousness.

What a blessed state it is to have the Blessed Hari established in one's heart! Hari or Nārāyaṇa, is *maṅgalāyatana,* the abode of all that is *maṅgalam,* goodness or auspiciousness. As the *Viṣṇu-Sahasranāmam* tells us: Viṣṇu or Hari is: *maṅgalānāṁ ca maṅgalaṁ* — the very soul of auspciousness in things that are auspicious. If the blessed Hari, ever hidden in all, becomes manifest in the heart of any one, what happens to his or her life? That is answered thus: every day of his or her life becomes a festival, becomes a *dīpāvali*—a *nityotsava, nitya,* i.e., perpetual, and *utsava,* i.e., festival. So also *nitya srī,* prosperity; and *nitya maṅgalam*. His life wells up with truth, goodness, beauty, and joy, like an artesian well, and all else can share in that joy. When you read Sri Ramakrishna's life, and when you read the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* by M., you find these descriptions. The Master is presented as full of joy, singing and dancing in ecstatic bliss and, later, cutting jokes with the young disciples sitting around him; as 'M' entered the Master's room, he found it 'a mart of joy'. That is a wonderful idea of religion. Religion is joy, fullest joy, with no shadow of privation or sorrow. In normal life, we have the alternations of joy and sorrow; but in spiritual realization, it is infinite bliss, unclouded by sorrow; and this is the birthright of everyone. A fraction of that divine bliss, welling up from the depths of our being where Hari ever abides, is enough to make our lives joyous and free.

Therefore the Vedānta teachers say: 'Here is a possibility of a life of joy for man, free from tension and privation; let man rise from organic joys to joys of mind, and then to the highest joy of his spiritual nature; he will realize from his own experience that that highest joy is truly highest, incomparable.'

The question asked by Emperor Yadu to Sage Dattātreya, the *Avadhūta,* i e., the free Soul, appreciating the natural joyous state of the sage's mind even though he does not resort to any sense pleasures, is significant in this connection (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam,* XI. 7.26-30):

Kuto buddhiriyaṁ brahman
akartuḥ suviśāradā;
Yāmāsādya bhavān loke
vidvān carati bālavat—

"Wherefrom have you, who are not engaged in any selfish activity, acquired this your extremely calm and clear reason, O holy one, in the strength of which you, who have acquired wisdom, moves about freely in the world, like a child?'

Prāyo dharmārtha kāmeṣu
vivitsāyāṁ ca mānavāḥ;

Hetunaiva samīhante
āyuṣo yaśasah śriyaḥ—

'In the world, people generally are seen to enagage themselves in various activities in the fields of social ethics, wealth, sensate satisfactions, and philosophical inquiries, motivated by the desires for long life, fame, and material prosperity.'

Tvaṁ tu kalpaḥ kaviḥ dakṣaḥ
subhago' mṛta-bhāṣaṇaḥ;
Na kartā nehase kiñcit
Jaḍonmatta-pisacavat—

'I find you, on the other hand, to be talented, wise, efficient, physically beautiful, and nectarine in speech; yet, you do not undertake any ego-centred work nor do you desire anything, but remain immobile like one inert or inebriated or ghoulish!'

Janeṣu dahyamaneṣu
kuma-lobha-davagninā;
Na tapyase agnina mukto
gangaṁbhastha iva dvipaḥ—

'Among the people in the world who are scorched by the elemental fire of sensate cravings and greed, you are unscorched by that fire, and remain free and firm, like an elephant in the waters of the *Gaṅgā*.'

Tvaṁ hi naḥ pṛcchataṁ brahman
ātmanyānanda karanam;
Brūhi sparśa-vihīnasya
bhavataḥ kevalātmanaḥ—

'Please reply to my question, O holy one who is established in aloneness, as to the source of your blissful state from within yourself, in spite of not experiencing any external sense contacts (which are the source of joy for all beings).'

The truth conveyed in the above five verses is conveyed also in Buddha's famous *Fire Discourse,* and is reinforced by three luminous verses from the *Gītā,* expounding the infinite spiritual energy resources in man and the joy of its realization *in this very life* (V. 21-23):

Bahya-sparśeṣvasaktatma
vindatyātmani yat sukham;
Sa brahma-yoga-yuktātmā
sukham akṣayam aśnute—

'With the heart unattached to external sense contacts, he realizes the joy that is in the Self; with his heart united to Brahman, he experiences undecaying happiness.'

Ye hi saṁsparśajā bhogā
duḥkha-yonaya eve te;
Adyantavantaḥ kaunteya
na teṣu ramate budhaḥ—

'Since pleasures arising from sense contacts are sources of suffering alone, and have their beginning and their end, O son of Kunti, a wise man does not delight in them.'

Śaknotīhaivayaḥ sodhum
prāk śarīra- vimokṣāṇāt;
Kāma-krodhodbhavaṁ vegam
sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ—

'Whoever can withstand, *in this very life,* before the liberation from he physical body (in death), the rushing current arising from sense cravings and anger, he or she is a *yogi,* he or she is a happy man or woman.'

25. *The Mission of Vedānta in the Modern Age*

We get joy by eating and drinking and other sense contacts; such joys have an external source. This is perfectly valid. We cannot expect a child to get joy from within itself. The child gets all its joy from external contacts all the time, *bāhya-sparśa* as the *Gītā* puts it. But when the child grows and matures, it learns, it *must learn, for* that is the sign of maturity, to find joy, not always from external contacts and stimuli, but sometimes from within itself; it must learn to sustain itself from within and not from external appreciation and applause, which is what children seek and need for their initial development. This is the education that humanity must steadily get, in order to achieve maximum fulfilment. *These human developmental possibilities are hidden in the womb of this amazing modern period of human history;* not just of Indian history only; for today, all national histories become intertwined into a great texture of mankind-awareness and international human development. During the last 5,000 years, our national history was intertwined with Central Asian history. In the modern period, our history has become intertwined with the whole world. This modern period of Indian history, and the modern period of world history, have this tremendous spiritual possibility hidden within it.

It is the mission of Vedānta to help to unfold that possibility worldwide. When people all over the world begin to understand this great Vedāntic truth of the divine nature of man and his organic capacity to realize it, and move even one inch forward, what a tremendous spiritual energy resource will become available to every human being! That is why I am hopeful of the future of mankind, and that hopefulness is based on facts, and on the spiritual richness of the human heritage, much of it unknown and untapped. There are serious maladies afflicting all contemporary societies, and there are also effective remedies. Apply the remedies, and the maladies go. When a child is sick at home with high fever, the family members are all depressed; that is not the time for being optimistic. But when the doctor comes and gives the appropriate medicine or injection and the fever goes and the child smiles, the family becomes optimistic.

Similarly, the human maladies are there today, serious and widespread. With much pettiness and meanness all around us, with much poverty, exploitation, violence, and crime, it is not the time for being optimistic; but when you realize that the appropriate remedies are available, remedies that are rational and sensible, not magical and misty, and that are relevant to man everywhere, there comes the sense of joy and hope. *This sense is heightened when we realize also that people everywhere, in increasing numbers, are seeking these very remedies, and are expectant.* In fact, all people respond to this Vedantic message of the inherent divinity within themselves, and many are experimenting with the varied techniques for its realization. What is the meaning of meditation? Ask that one question. This is a technique which has become universal today. 50 years ago, most people in the West used to look down upon a man sitting in meditation. They used to treat him as crazy and abnormal. But, today, nobody does so; even the New York multi-millionaire, the down-to-earth worldly man, treats it as a wonderful art and technique. This universal appreciation of this worderful discipline of meditation emphasises the great Vedāntic truth of man going beyond his sensory and phychic dimensions in search of a profound mystery within himself or herself, with the conviction that unfolding that alone is the only way to total fulfilment. When you swim on the surface, Sri Ramakrishna used to say, you get cheap shells; but when you dive deep, you get pearls. He used to love to sing a song with this very theme: Dive deep, dive deep, dive deep, O my mind, in the ocean of beauty; great gems lie deep in that ocean.

26. *Conclusion*

Therefore, when speaking on the subject of *Vedānta and the Future of Mankind,* I can strike a note of hope, a note of cheer, in spite of knowing fully that contemporary human conditions are murky and depressing. It is not the ancient philosophy of Vedānta alone that sustains one in that hope and assurance, but also the great shining modern teachers like Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, whom Romain Rolland introduces to his readers in his *Life of Ramakrishna* as the *splendid symphony of the Universal Soul,* and who exemplified that dynamic and universal Vedāntic vision in this modern age. *Yes, what we could not achieve in the past, we can achieve in this modern period.* That is why we can go home with a conviction that, though things are very dismal around us, they need not continue to be so. It is very dark at midnight; then, a few hours later, the sky becomes rosy with the approach of dawn; and soon the sun rises on the horizon, dispelling all darkness. So, the silent prayer that goes out from the hearts of millions of men and women today is voiced in the ancient Vedic prayer of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad,* composed a few thousand years ago (1.3.28).

Asato mā sad gamaya!
Tamaso mā jyotir gamaya!
Mṛtyor mā amṛtam gamaya—

'Lead us from the unreal to the Real!
Lead us from darkness to Light!
Lead us from death to Immortality!'

When I go round the world, year after year, I come across cross-sections of people who respond to this great Vedāntic message of the divine in the heart of man. Even in the professedly secular Marxist state of the U. S. S. R., I found the professors, research scholars, and students of the Moscow State University responding heartily to this message, when I presented it to them in October 1977 in the course of my speech on their own suggested theme: *Swami Vivekananda: His Humanism*. Some of them felt the very idea wonderful that, within this human system, there is a profound divine dimension. And one of the professors said during the question hour: Yes, it is a wonderfully fascinating idea; please tell us more about it. And I spent the major part of the question-answer session to expound it further. In his *life of Vivekananda,* Romain Rolland presents this as the central theme of Vivekananda's speeches in the Chicago Parliament and thereafter (p. 42):

> 'Each time he repeated with new arguments, but with same force of conviction, his thesis of a universal religion without limit of time or space, uniting the whole *Credo* of the human spirit, from the enslaved fetishism of the savage to the liberal creative affirmations of modern science. He harmonized them into a magnificent synthesis, which, far from extinguishing the hope of a single one, helped all hopes to grow and flourish according to their proper nature. There was to be no other dogma but the divinity inherent in man and his capacity for indefinite evolution.'

In this way, Vedānta will certainly help in the development of a humanity, physically strong and healthy, mentally alert and sensitive, and spiritually united. That would be a blessed day for us and for the rest of the world, and joy it is to work towards that end! *Namaste*.

30

MAKING LIFE OUT OF A LIFE*

1. *Introductory*

We have all gathered this evening in the premises of this house of Sri and Srimati Gopalakrishnan for a purpose about which we have already heard from Sri T.N. Chaturvedi. One year ago, we had a tragedy—the death of Murali Gopalakrishnan. It was a personal tragedy for Sri and Srimati Gopalakrishnan, but shared by thousands of other persons as well. Since then, just one year is over. Gopalakrishnan wanted me to come and speak at a meeting of intimate friends of Murali and family. I knew Gopalakrishnan, and also his children when they were very young, when I was at Delhi in the 1950's. I have been drawn to them and so, when he asked me to come and spend an evening here, I readily accepted. So many aspects of the type of life lived by Murali had inspired me also as a child and as a youth—the spirit of adventure, fearlessness, patriotic dedication; these are all sterling virtues in any individual. Our tragedy is that such a promising life was cut short; but it was not cut short in an ordinary way. When such a life is cut short in an ordinary way, we feel intensely grieved; but when there is a heroic touch in that getting cut off, then our attitude becomes different; and I wish to tell you all, this evening, that our country has entered into a new chapter of its great history, where we shall have many more of such experiences, such tragedies.

2. *The Call of a Heroic Life*

For when you begin to live, and live for a great cause or a great purpose, everything will not be smooth. So many challenges will come. Modern India is passing from an age of easy living, living in the narrowest circle possible, to a life of expansion, a life of adventure, a life of heroic endeavour. That is the meaning of freedom with which we are today facing a tremendous future. And that future will be written by lives lived in a spirit of heroism in every department of life. It is this spirit that we lacked for centuries together. Our immediate past, which is still lingering with us, was a stagnant static state of life and attitude, both individual and collective. But in the modern period, that stagnant water of life of the nation is being shaken, is being stirred, giving birth to opportunities and occasions for a new type of greatness, a new type of heroism.

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* Based on the tape record of a speech delivered on October 1, 1981, at New Delhi.

The first of such heroism we saw in the last century and the first part of this century. Our great national struggle for freedom found many of our young people sacrificing their lives, their comfort, their everything, with a view to getting freedom for their country. That was a great saga of heroic endeavour. From that experience we could see that no more was India sleeping; no more was she cozy and comfortable. Our nation had entered the great battle-field of the new *Kurukṣetra* and, from that age to this date and for centuries to come, we are, and we shall be, in the battle-field of life, in the battle-field of this great *Kurukṣetra,* with all its ups and downs, with all its challenges. We shall see young men and women coming forward to face death, unafraid of death, to carry forward the glory of man to its highest level. For centuries together, we never knew this ideal at all; our people were extremely cozy and comfortable; in fact, all our parents used to train their children in that cozy attitude, exhorting them; do not go there, do not climb a tree, do not climb a mountain, do not go far away, do not cross a swollen river because you may die. All these things were taught to us. Never was it taught to us to go and dare climb a mountain, cross a swollen river, and, if death comes, face it.

That robust philosophy was never given to us. That is why we had a contracted national life, extremely limited in scope—everybody saving his life, everybody seeking the cozy life; by this, the whole national mind had contracted. But, today, that dismal chapter is over. If you want to see the tragedy of Murali in the proper perspective, you must see it in this national context, in the context of the new chapter of her long history that is being written by our country, inspired by the heroic mood of struggle, of endeavour, of facing the terrible fearlessly, and not running away towards the soft and the easy. This is the new lesson that our country has learnt a little, but has much more to learn in a big way. Many more things we shall learn hereafter, as we enter deeper into the challenges and opportunities of the fast-unfolding modern age of our history. No longer shall we be in that state of contraction. The beautiful sentence that Vivekananda had uttered towards the end of the last century applies to our India of today: 'All expansion is life, all contraction is death.' What we call life in a contracted state is really death; the expanding state is really life. This truth has to be understood in a big way by our people. It is easy to live just a cozy life, life put in a glass case, as it were, to protect it from all harm, with all daring and risk taken away from life. That was the music of life, meant to lull us to sleep, that we were taught by our parents and teachers for centuries together. But, **today, we are blessed to listen to another music—the music with the power to awaken and energize.**

We heard this powerful music first from Vivekananda—the spirit of heroic endeavour, the spirit conveyed by him through a famous verse of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad:* 'Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached!' Don't contract yourself into sleep; we have slept for ages; we have wept for ages; no more weeping or sleeping now, but wake up and then march on, march on; life is a battle between life and death, between expansion and contraction. You have to face the terrible, face the brute, even embrace death. This kind of philosophy we had heard once before; that was from the great heroic leader, the great universal mind, *Bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa **in the *Gītā*. That was a powerful message from the battle-field of *Kurukṣetra*. Some of the verses which you heard sung earlier this evening are beautiful verses from the *Gītā* expounding the truth of** the immortal dimension of man. Death belongs to the body, not to the spirit of man. Sankarācārya says in his commentary that even God has not power to destroy the Ātman, the true self of man. It is ever-pure, ever-luminous, ever-free, and immortal. A little awareness of this truth by our people will make the whole nation heroic and fearless. We have been in the grip of all sorts of fears. Today, a new attitude of fearlessness must be cultivated. That will set our **nation in the direction of the expansion of life, expansion into different directions of struggle and endeavour, into different dimensions of human greatness, bidding good-bye for ever to that** life-contraction and death towards which we were going for centuries together.

That is the context in which we have to live in the India of today. Our philosophy in the Upaniṣads and in the *Gītā*—the Vedanta—considers life as an adventure, like climbing a mountain, with all its perils and joys. The highest thought of the Upaniṣads is like the Mount Everest. Can you climb it? Those who have strength, those who have stamina, dare it. Life is not easy, life is not cozy. The search for truth, the search for goodness, the search for beauty, the search for excellence, is a heroic endeavour. It appeals only to those who are heroic and fearless. So the invitation to humanity sent out by our Upaniṣads is conveyed in the famous verse of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* partly quoted earlier (3.14):

Uttiṣṭhata, jagrata, prapya varan nibodhata;
Kṣurasya dhārā duratyayā
Durgaṁ pathastat Kavayo vadanti—

'Arise, Awake, and, approaching the great ones, enlighten yourself; that path is like walking on the edge of a razor, difficult to tread and hard to cross, so say the sages.'

Thus the Upaniṣads summon man to give up all cozy and lazy attitudes, to see life as an adventure. What kind of adventure? Like 'walking on the edge of a razor'. *Razor's Edge* is the title of one of Somerset Maugham's books and a film based on it; and it is taken from this *Kaṭha Upaniṣad.* Life is a razor's edge; can you walk over it? Then you are a hero. That heroic endeavour, that heroic attitude, and the strength and fearlessness that go with it, are constantly emphasized in the Upaniṣads, in the *Gītā* and, today, in the Vivekananda literature.

Our nation will write the next beautiful and glorious chapter of its long history when this heroic spirit captures the mind and heart of our people. Dare, ever dare, always dare, is one of the great ideals and mottos of the French Revolution. Swami Vivekananda wanted that daring spirit to come to our people. During the past few centuries, we all thought that we were living, but it was not really living. It was a living death. But today we are experiencing the stirrings of a new way of life, expansion, struggle in all departments of life. Wherever you find initiative, wherever you find people striking out into new lines of development in the fields of industry, economics, politics, society, religion, and science, you are witnessing the dynamics of life, the spirit of expansion, replacing that old process of contraction. It was this spirit that Swami Vivekananda injected into our stagnant society, immediately after which came tremendous political awakening and the onset of the modern revolution. That revolution found several of our bright young people, fearless and dedicated, just facing the gallows with a smile, just going to backward areas to undertake constructive nation-building services. That is the true spirit of modern India. That has to be intensified in all parts of India in a new constructive, creative, heroic expression, listening to the call, more to *live* for the nation than to *die* for the nation; in such life, there is death of the little self and expansion into the larger self. As exhorted by Vivekananda in one of his letters: (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda* p.III):

> 'They alone live who live for others,
> the rest are more dead than alive.'

3. *Meeting the Challenge of Death*

When we speak of the greatness of any nation, we always find that it arose out of this daring to face death—sometimes physical but always death to the self-centred ego. How did England become great? By young English people daring to go round the world; to sail on the high seas, to scale the mountains, to wade through the forests and swamps, prepared to face privations and even death, just for self-actualization and for the glory of England. That is the anatomy of all greatness. The ancient Greeks achieved greatness only through this way. The heroic element makes the Greek tragedies beautiful examples of the dynamics of Greek life. Some fate is working to destroy the hero, but he does not mind it, he fights against it and goes down fighting his way. That is the heroic spirit depicted in the ancient Greek tragedies. That is the spirit you find depicted in our own *Mahābhāratha,* as well as in *Bhagavān* Śri Kṛṣṇa's teachings. We had cultivated it long ago and achieved greatness as a people; then we forgot all about it and became small and an object of pity to the rest of the world. In the prelude to the modern period, just before we entered into its currents and cross currents, we had a blaze of that heroic spirit and endeavour, that facing death constantly without fear, in a leader like Guru Gobind Singh. His life is a saga of great heroism, constantly facing death for the great cause of human freedom and dignity and unity, of defending man against oppression, and sacrificing wife, children, and himself in the struggle. *In such examples, we can see life being made out of a life.* You will never find that dynamic touch among those comfort-loving, contented, cozy, self-centred people, who protect themselves from all hardships and dangers. This new understanding of making life out of a life must come to us today. Life has to face death to become richer because, from the ancient Vedic times up to our time, this truth has been given to us by our great teachers that the Supreme Reality has two aspects, one is life, the other is death. That is what the 5000-years-old *Rg-Veda* said:

Yasya chaya amṛtam, yasya mṛtyuḥ—

Reality is that 'whose shadow is life and death'. We have to grasp this truth. If we take only one part and neglect and give up the other, we can never have the full life, can never be great. Face both, because both are two phases of the same total reality. When you can face death, you realise the meaning of life. No philosophy can achieve depth without understanding the nature of death. We may have shallow philosophies; we had them for the past many centuries; that is why no greatness came to our nation. But when you understand this truth that life and death are two aspects of the same reality, we learn to welcome death, but not in a pathological mood, but heroically. That is a great lesson taught by Vivekananda to our nation. 'Worship the terrible', he says. In his famous poem *Kālī, the Mother,* he writes (*Complete Works,* Vol.IV, p.384):

'For Terror is Thy name,
    Death is in Thy breath,
And every shaking step
    destroys a world for ever,
Thou "Time", the All-Destroyer!
    Come, O Mother, Come!

'Who dares misery love
  And hug the form of Death,
Dance in Destruction's dance,
  To him the Mother comes.'

4. *True Life versus False Life*

In Guru Gobind Singh we see this fully expressed. Today, we find in hundreds of our young people fear of privation and death and a shallow attachment to life. What is in such a humdrum day-to-day life? What is talked of as adjustment to life is but a combination of a shallow life and a shallow adjustment. Is it worthwhile, is it fit for a human being?Modern psychiatry also reters to the emptiness and unreality of such a life. Parents constantly exhort their children to adjust to life. What does it mean? It means: Adjust a false self to a false world! Real understanding of life is not there. The so-called 'normal' adjusted life is truly the abnormal and false life. Most of the parents in India know only that philosophy. In the words of the British psychiatrist. R.D. Laing (*The Divided Self*, Preface to the Pelican Edition):

> 'Thus I would wish to emphasize that our 'normal' adjusted state is too often the abdication of ecstasy, the betrayal of our true potentialities; that many of us are only too successful in acquiring a false self to adjust to false realities.'

The courage to break through all this falsity and to create a new world of creative life and total human fulfilment was never with us for long. But, today, India's great teachers and great examples convey to us this very great virtue; they ignite the spark of Prometheus and Bhagīratha in us. In Socrates of ancient Athens, we come across a remarkable personality who drank poison calmly with a smile, without any fear. That tremendous strength can come in varying degrees to everyone through this philosophy, to which life and death are only two aspects. Plato presents an inspiring picture of Socrates drinking poison, while conversing with his disciples sitting around him. Crito, one of the disciples, asks Socrates a question:

> 'Socrates, how shall we bury you? Socrates smiles and answers: you must first catch *me*, the real me, before you ask that question. Be of good cheer, Crito; you refer to this body; as for the body, do with it as you do with other people.'

Socrates knew that he was not the perishable body; he knew his real nature as the deathless Ātman which, as described in the *Gītā*, 'no weapon can pierce, no fire can burn, no water can wet, and no air can dry' (2.23)—

> *Nainaṁ chindanti śastrāṇi nainaṁ dahati pavakaḥ;*
> *Na cainaṁ kledayāntyāpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ.*

That is profound philosophy. No heroic achievements can come to a nation if it hugs to this perishable body all the time. It is born, it grows, it decays, it dies. But man's identity is something deeper and greater, and more profound, whereform come all fearlessness, all courage, all daring. If our soldiers posted in the high Himalayan ranges to defend our country are to face their challenges effectively, they need this philosophy. If they consider themselves only as the body, they will strive hard to get themselves transferred to the cosy and pleasant Connaught Place in New Delhi! That is, alas, the attitude and practice of most of our people in employment today! The heroic touch has not come to our nation in a big way yet. But the teaching and the message is there available to all—the teaching and the message that inspired our ancestors to create a great culture, that inspired the Greeks to create their great culture, that stimulated a man like Alexander, who appeared a few decades after Socrates, to a life of daring and courage and conquest, but who himself was conquered by a still more daring Indian sage with whom he came into contact in the Punjab.

5. *The Spirit versus the Sword*

The confrontation of Alexander, who conquered half the world, with this sage, who conquered himself, is a great story narrated, not in Indian literature, but in Greek literature. When Emperor Alexander talked to that sage, he was very much impressed with his wisdom, and invited him to Athens. But the sage politely declined. Then Alexander used all means of persuasion and pressure; still he did not agree. Then the Emperor took out his sword and said that he would kill him if he did not agree. Then that sage burst into a laughter. Alexander, amazed, asked him: Why are you laughing? Are you not afraid of this sword, Just mark the situation. Two powers of the world standing face to face, the power of the sword and the power of the spirit. Then comes the great answer of the sage ***(Classical Accounts of India* by R.C.Majumdar, pp.444-46):**

> You kill me, you, a mere Emperor of the material world! That is the most foolish remark of yours. I am by nature deathless. You may cut this body into pieces; but I do not care, for I am not the body but the spirit, free and immortal.

For the first time, this great Emperor, who had humbled the powers of the world, was face to face with a unique formidable force in the form of a sage who did not fear him, who knew his real nature, just like Socrates in Alexander's own Athens. This was a great lesson which had made a tremendous impression on the Greek mind; for, more than one Greek historian of Alexander's campaigns refer to this incident, which, however, finds no reference in our own history.

6. *Life as the Battle-field of Kurukṣetra*

I wish to mention that the concept of life as a battle-field, where you are constantly face to face with death, where you struggle and overcome the challenges, or are overpowered by the challenges and court death—that is the philosophy that makes a nation great. If I want to protect myself all the time, how can I become great ? I must be able to dare to face the world of challenges. Even during our recent decadence, we had a few courageous people inspired by this philosophy. But as a people, as a nation, we had said goodbye to that philosophy and the heroic attitude it sustains. We became even cowards many a time in our recent history. Let us remember what Shakespeare said: 'Cowards die many times in their lives, but the valiant taste of death but once'. We need that philosophy that **rouses that valour, that courage, that strength, to inspire us today.** When our young people will get the inspiration of the Vedānta taught by Swami Vivekananda, they will develop the capacity for adventure, for daring, for creative life and work, for facing the challenges of life and death.

When our country became free, one of the fine things that we did was to take to mountaineering, and institute mountaineering courses. Decades earlier, Vivekananda had done a lot of **mountaineering. Mountaineering is a great adventure where you** live in the face of great joy, and also great danger and death, every minute. If you are afraid, do not go. In a famous talk Vivekananda gave in America, dealing with the subject of the mistakes one might commit while living a forward life, he said *(Complete Works*, Vol. V, p.253):

> 'March on. Do not look back upon little mistakes and things. In this battle-field of ours, the dust of mistakes must be raised. Those who are so thin-skinned that they cannot bear the dust, let them go out of the ranks!'

In a battle-field, one must be able to face all ups and downs with courage and determination. The whole of our *Bhagavad-Gītā* is a great saga of such a robust philosophy. Life is truly life, not when measured in terms of years, but in terms of quality and richness. This is the one lesson we need to learn today. Our nation will become great once again when millions of people will develop this fearlessness, this daring, this courage before death itself, facing death with a smile. We need such a philosophy and the will to respond to it. And that is what we have got in the philosophy of Vedānta as expounded in the Upaniṣads, in the *Gītā,* and in the Vivekananda literature. What a rich and beautiful heritage for any people!

7. *The Bright Example of Śaṅkarācārya*

We have a wonderful story of a mighty personality who lived in India about 1200 years ago. He is one of the greatest creators of the Indian mind and destiny—the great Śaṅkarācārya. He hailed from our today's host Gopalakrishnan's own state, namely, Kerala, and lived from 788 to 820 A.D. There is a beautiful story about Śaṅkarācārya's birth. His mother got a boon from God whether she preferred to have a child who would be very ordinary but would live long, or a child of extraordinary talents doing great work, but short-lived. The mother of Śaṅkarācārya preferred the second one. So Śaṅkarācārya was born with a life-span of only 16 years; later on, another 16 years were added by the blessings of the Sage Vyāsa. And he died at the age of 32. What a short life! Most of us do not even begin our life and achievement at the age of 32. But Śaṅkara completed his life and work within these 32 years. And what an intense life and what intense action! He transformed the Indian scene; he educated and shaped and enriched the Indian mind and thought within that short period; and India, let us remember, is not a small country but a vast continent.

Introducing him in his Madras lecture on the *The Sages of India,* Vivekananda says (*The Complete Works,* Vol. III, p.265):

> 'But India has to live, and the spirit of the Lord descended again. He who declared: "I will come whenever virtue subsides", came again, and this time the manifestation was in the South, and up rose that young Brahmin, of whom it has been delcared that, at the age of 16, he had completed all his writings; the marvellous boy Śaṅkarācārya arose. The writings of that boy of 16 are the wonders of the modern world, and so was the boy'.

Even agnostic Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru refers with deep appreciation to the greatness of Śaṅkarā's life and work (*Glimpses of World History,* letter 44):

> 'Śaṅkarācārya's record is a remarkable one. ... The whole country is stirred up intellectually by Śaṅkarā's books and commentaries and arguments. Not only does he become the great leader of the Brahmin class, but he seems to catch the imagination of the masses. It is an unusual thing for a man to become a great leader chiefly because of his powerful intellect, and for such a person to impress himself on millions of people and on history. Great soldiers and conquerors seem to stand out in history. They become popular or are hated, and sometimes they mould history. Great religious leaders have moved millions and fired them with enthusiasm, but always this has been on the basis of faith. The emotions have been appealed to and have been touched.
>
> 'It is difficult for an appeal to the mind and to the intellect to go far. Most people unfortunately do not think; they feel and act according to their feelings. Śaṅkarā's appeal was to the mind and intellect and to reason. It was not just the repetition of a dogma contained in an old book. Whether his argument was right or wrong is immaterial for the moment. What is interesting is his intellectual approach to religious problems and even more so the success he gained in spite of this method of approach. ...
>
> 'And the great success which met his campaign all over the country in a very short time also shows how intellectual and cultural currents travelled rapidly from one end of the country to another.'

8. *The Heroic Message of the Mahābhārata*

Earlier, in the *Mahābhārata,* we get a powerful verse. Whenever and wherever I have quoted that verse, it always had a tremendous impact on the mind of listeners. It is a short Sanskrit line containing a profound message of the beauty of an *intense* life. There was a king by name Sanjaya in the Northern Sindh region; his mother bore the name Viduḷa. She was a heroic queen-mother. How she inspired her son to be brave is what the story conveys. This young king went out for battle, got defeated, became weak-minded and depressed. The mother tried to rouse his royal spirit in several ways; it did not happen. Then, finally, she uttered a sentence conveying a tremendous power that helped to rouse the courage of the prince. That line conveys so much inspiration in so few words. That is the uniqueness of great literature—the capacity to convey great meaning to humanity in a few words. And what that great queen-mother conveyed to her princely son ages ago, our Mother India conveys to every child in this country today (*Udyogaparva,* 120.15):

Muhūrtam Jvalitaṁ śreyo, na tu dhūmāyitaṁ ciram—

'It is better to flame forth for one instant, than to smoke away for ages!'

How many lives remain un-ignited, but simply smoke away for 70 years, 90 years, 100 years! A short intense life, burnt out in a great struggle and achievement of the humanistic impulse, is preferable to a humdrum life of long duration. That is the message to us from our own past. In this modern period, we had a Vivekananda. During his brief 39 years, he made a tremendous impact on both East and West; even in that short span of life, his actual public work was only during the last nine years. And how he compressed so much work into that intense life of nine years! 'Intensity' is a remarkable word. Man living an intense life—what a beautiful idea. I wish that our young people capture that spirit. When you remember Murali today, you remember also this concept of intensity of life, this flaming forth for an instant instead of smoking away for ages!

9. *Religion: Ethnical versus Spiritual*

The capacity to attract people, the capacity to love and be loved—these are all spiritual qualities. What we normally understand as religion—Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist—these are all *ethnical* concepts of religion. One is born into that religion, one has no choice. But the other idea of religion, spiritual, non-ethnical, and universal, is what you choose freely, what you build up in yourself as a rich and firm character, what you handle like climbing a mountain, daring all obstacles and difficulties and building up your destiny yourself—that is the heroic idea of religion, *the science of religion.* There you find the spiritual quality of human life; there you meet with high strength of character; there you come across the play of the heroic in human life. All these come when one starts climbing the Mount Everest of experience. That is why, as I said earlier, spiritual life is similar to mountain climbing. In several passages of the Upaniṣads, this kind of climbing the Mount Everest of experience is compared to archery. Says the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (2.2.3 and 4):

Dhanurgṛhītvaupaniṣadaṁ mahāstram
śaraṁ hyupāsā-niśitaṁ saṁdadhīta;
Āyamya tat bhāvagatena cetasā
lakṣyaṁ tadevākṣaraṁ somya viddhi—

'Taking hold of the great weapon of the bow of the Upaniṣad, fix on it the arrow of the self sharpened by meditation; and pulling the string of the mind with love, strike at that very target, namely, the Imperishable (Brahman), O amiable one'

Praṇavo dhanuḥ śarohyātmā
brahma tat lakṣyamucyate;
Apramattena veddhavyam
śaravat tanmayo bhavet—

'Om is the bow, the self is verily the arrow, and Brahman is that target; it can be hit only by the alert of mind; and let the arrow (of self) become one with the target (Brahman)'

Only a heroic soul can do it. All weakness, all fear, must go. This was Kṛṣṇa's message to Arjuna in the *Gītā*, the message of facing life's challenges (2.2 and 3):

Kutastvā Kaśmalamidam viṣame samupasthitam;
Anārya-juṣṭam asvargyam akīrtikaram Arjunā—

'Wherefrom has come to you, O Arjuna, this mean attitude, at a critical and difficult situation, not entertained by the nobleminded, not conducive to heaven, and productive of ill fame?'

At the end of the first chapter, when Arjuna became weak-minded, he threw down his bow and arrow and opted for a cosy and comfortable life, away from all struggle. The second chapter begins with Kṛṣṇa smiling and looking at him, thinking: What has happened to this chap? He was such a courageous fellow, but his nerves have failed him just now. And he then administers a tonic to Arjuna in the next verse. These two verses convey the very spirit of the positive philosophy of the *Gītā:*

Klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ pātha
  naitat tvayyupapadyate;
Kṣudraṁ hṛdayadaurbalyam
  tyaktvottiṣṭha parantapa—

'Never yield to this unmanliness, O Pārtha; it does not befit one like you; forsaking this mean weakness of heart, stand up (and face your challenges), O scorcher of your enemies!'

Kṛṣṇa says: You will never get glory through this; on the other hand, it is *akīrtikaram*—it will taint you with infamy. Don't fall a prey to such chicken-heartedness. It does not befit you. You are meant for a great heroic life of action. Your mind has been covered by a temporary delusion. Therefore, stand up, and face your problems; be a hero; don't be a coward by running away from the problems facing you.

That is what makes the *Gītā* a unique book conveying a profound message capable of creating a nation of heroes. Today we need to listen to that music of strength, that music of courage, that music of love and compassion, that music of service and dedication, that is the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Literally, it is *Gītā,* song, or, as Sir Edwin Arnold has characterized his English translation of the book, it is the *Song Celestial*. The *Gītā* is the celestial music of human dignity and glory, not the glory of a caste or creed or nation. Vivekananda saw part of this message of human dignity of the *Gītā* implemented by the Western people in their culture better than by us in India. They faced difficulties, they faced dangers, they built up the secular modern culture through scientific research, exploration of the earth, of the oceans, of space, and partly of man also. This is the fruit of the heroic attitude. We need to capture that spirit of the

Gītā. I remember one example from modern Western history, where this spirit of the *Gītā*, and of Vivekananda, finds illustrated. That is in the story of the Norwegian navigator Fridtjof Nansen's expedition to the North Pole. I have been to Oslo in Norway, I have seen the ship which Nansen used for his North Polar exploration trip in 1893-96 preserved in the marine museum. The story says that this Nansen, having built the ship, wanted to give a name to it. His wife did the naming. She named it *Fram* which, in Norwegian, means *Forward*. This is symbolic, for, in every high adventure, we want every stimulus to make us go forward, not backward. Having named the ship, he gave himself this message, this maxim: Whenever you are on a great adventure, do two things: 'Cut the ropes and burn the bridges *behind* you; there is then no other alternative but to go *forward!*

10. *Arise and Awake!*

That is a wonderful message for all of us. How close it sounds to Vivekananda's recurring message from our Upaniṣads referred to earlier: *Uttiṣṭhata, jāgrata, prāpya varān nibodhata*—'Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.' Its literal translation is : 'Arise, Awake, and approaching the great illumined ones, enlighten yourself'. The way to greatness is not easy, it is not cosy, you cannot saunter into the great life; it needs alertness, for it is difficult to tread and hard to cross, like walking on the edge of a razor, as referred to earlier. Under the inspiration of this heroic message, our nation worked hard, created a great culture, and contributed much to world civilization. Then came a decadent period. Weakness of mind and body set in; creative fires all but died out. People, big and small, preferred the line of least resistance in every department of life. From that darkness and despair, the nation was awakened and rescued by our great modern leaders, and the nation achieved political freedom, the necessary prelude to every other type of freedom. And for making this political freedom flower into every type of freedom, we need to continue the nurturing of the same heroic spirit. We need men and women endowed with clear thinking, courage, dedication, and intense practical efficiency. On an occasion like this, when we celebrate the memory of a dynamic youth, we are honouring an assemblage of spiritual qualities—

patriotic dedication, efficient journalism, mountaineering, handling other human beings in a friendly way, and digging affections in hundreds of hearts. *These qualities do not come merely from getting university degree:* They do not come from mere intellectual development. *These virtues and graces can proceed only from some spiritual growth.* That is the way our Upaniṣads look at it; they give us a broad conception, a wide spectrum, of human spirituality, unlike all ethnical religions which tie one down to certain beliefs in creed and dogma and ritual. We need the stimulus and guidance of this broadening and deepening philosophy to help our nation to scale the heights of greatness. We had a great past; but our future will be much greater; great sages and thinkers and scientists and workers will appear in the coming decades—such is the hope-inspiring message we got in this modern period through Swami Vivekananda, who knew the great potentialities of the modern transition.

This particular sentence of Viduḷa from the *Mahābhārata* must be often recited by every parent before every child in our country—'Better to flame forth for one instant than to smoke away for ages!' In English literature, there are two lines from Ben Johnson which say: 'In small proportions do we but beauty see, in short measures life may perfect be'. What a beautiful idea! In short measures we may make our life perfect. Quality is the criterion of human evolution, not quantity, says twentieth-century biology. Years ago, I read in an English book the conversation between two old Englishmen. Said one to the other: What are the achievements of our life? We have lived 80 years. And he himself added: The food I have consumed these 80 years will need 12 wagons to carry them; and yours, my friend, will need 2 wagons more! That is the type of answer that many people can give about the output of their lives. Where is quality in it? It is mere existence, bereft of qualitative richness. But a heroic life is quite different. Within a short period, such people impress a mark on history. And so Vivekananda told his countrymen: Live such a life that when you die, you will leave a permanent wholesome impact, small or big, on the world. That is the way to live, according to that beautiful *Mahābhārata* dictum.

We all mourn the death of a dear or great soul. In Śaṅkaracarya's death, our nation must have mourned; but he had given the people so much within so short a time. Similarly, Vivekananda died very young, at 39. He began his actual public life at the age of 30 when he appeared before the Chicago World Parliament of Religions. And after only 9 years of active life, he passed away in 1902. But during those 9 brief years, what he thought and said had such intensity and power so as to create and transform history for the next several centuries, both in East and West. Romain Rolland presents him, in his *Life of Vivekananda,* as a beautiful example of a perfect harmony between East and West, ancient and modern, religion and science, and the sacred and the secular, and says that he was 'the harmony of all human energy'. Our young people must breathe that inspiration and live and act accordingly, and slowly build up the material, intellectual, moral, and spiritual strength of India, creating a new history, writing a new brilliant chapter in the long history of our great country.

On an occasion such as this, our grief is also mingled with a sense of joy. That arises from the fact that the youth whose death we mourn died in a big way, in a heroic way. Murali died one year ago; time softens man's sorrows; but the sweet flavour of a great life remains much longer, particularly in the expanding context of our New India. Many of you may have read in modern Japanese history the famous story of a mother who had only one son. He went to war and died fighting. The mother wept; and the people around went to console her. To this, she gave her unique answer: I had only one son, and he died for the nation; I am weeping not for losing my only son, but for not having a second son to send to fight and die for my nation! That is a noble attitude of heroic motherhood. A heroic nation looks at such problems of death and sorrow from that point of view. Only heroic parents can give birth to, and nurture, heroic sons and daughters.

Vivekananda again and again pointed out the recurrence of the terms *dhīra* and *vīra* in our Sanskrit literature, terms standing for the English word 'hero'. Many of our people today, I am sorry to repeat, do not have that robust heroic attitude. There is too much concentration on the very limited circle of life constituted of profit and pleasure; the wider horizons of life have receded; this makes life humdrum. In fact, wherever I go in India, to the question I put to people, young or old: How are you? I usually get this chilling answer: Somehow getting on! Such replies come from a truncated, empty life, low-horizon life; all ecstasy and zest have evaporated from it, except the bare round of humdrum sensory satisfactions. It is ecstasy and zest that enable one to say: Yes, I am fine. This is the answer expected of all of us in this most revolutionary and creative period of our long history. That can come only when we relate ourselves to the onward current of our history and participate in the shaping of it, instead of cutting ourselves away from it, to become stagnant pools of frustrations and complaints. The sentiments that the English poet Wordsworth expressed about the first phase of the French Revolution is very true of modern India: Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, but to be young was very heaven!

11. *Conclusion*

Every youth, imprinted with the heroic touch of soul, will say to himself or herself that this chaotic state of India is the best period for me to live. I can put my ideas into it. I can create something more beautiful and perfect out of it; I do not want to live a life of stagnant isolation in the resurgent context of contemporary India. The nation is marching and I, as a citizen in it, shall give it a gentle push and direction. That should be the positive attitude of all young minds towards the problems of their country. That alone signals the heroic touch. Twenty-eight-year-old Murali had that touch. 'In short measures life may perfect be!' With his brief but intense life, he leaves behind so many of us to mourn for him, and, even in mourning, to feel proud of him. Real greatness is such that we don't mourn at the death of such people. we rather mourn for ourselves. That is what Sri Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna in the *Gītā* with respect to Bhīṣma, and Drona and similar heroes (2.11):

Aśocyān anvaśocastvam prajnāvādān ca bhāṣase—

'You mourn for those who do not need this mourning, and yet you speak words like those of a wise man!'

Our country needs more and more young people of the type of Murali; many of our young people have no wider horizons beyond the small circle of their own profit and pleasure; *they are a bundle of opinions leading to vain gossip, instead of a dynamic centre of a few well-thought-out convictions leading to effective social action.* We have too many negative minds and empty lives amongst us; naturally, they are a bureau of complaints—complaints against everybody else, including one's parents and God himself. *Our people have to develop a positive mind:* I have got this fine body, I have got this education; I shall do my best to use these advantages to alleviate the sufferings of my people, and put up with my own sufferings in the developing context of my nation. This is the inspiration that men like Murali leave behind when they die. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru quotes in one of his books the following famous line from Bernard Shaw, which I like much and find very relevant to our own human situation: 'This is the joy of life, to be used for a purpose which you consider mighty. To be a force of nature, and not a clod of ailments and grievances, ever complaining that the world does not devote itself to making *you* happy'. Our youth have to choose between being a complaining clod of earth and a force of nature by which they make an impact upon the human situation around them. *That is the profile of the heroic life which one chisels out of the given life;* and I am glad that we are all here to experience lovingly the fragrance of such a young life.

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OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE MODERN CHALLENGE*

1. *Introductory*

I am very thankful to the R.D. Birla Smarak Kosh for inviting me to give this first lecture in their endowment lecture series. R.D. Birla and the entire Birla family have done many great services; but there is one striking thing about them that we all appreciate—successful business and making money are not the ends; they utilize profits for human service. Varieties of services are being done in all parts of India, and even abroad, by the Birla family and their various trusts. One special thing which the rich people of India can learn from their example is that making money through business and industry is not to be linked with a luxurious and wasteful life, like going to night clubs and cabarets all over the world, but with a simple personal life. With whatever surplus you have, serve the people.

We know of several of our young people getting wealthy today, sometimes very quickly, and wasting a lot of their money in lavish and *empty* living. What I have noticed in all the members of the Birla family is the utter simplicity in personal life, devotion to the great cause of our religion and culture, and a certain humane attitude. In this way, money-making can be made, not a dismal proposition, but a really enlightening adventure, carried on under the guidance of that great philosophy of enlightened self-interest. The Birlas have built up a big empire of business, but, side by side, also a wide empire of human service.

I wish to stress this, because we often forget it in this modern period, particularly in the post-independence period. Young people make money just for wasteful expenditure without knowing that this money comes from the people and a good part of it must go back to the people.

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* Based on the tape-record of the First R.D. Birla Memorial Lecture delivered at the Birla Matushri Auditorium, Bombay, on 28 January 1980

2. *'Enjoy Life through Renunciation'*

Many great students of Indian philosophy and culture have been inspired by one line in the Upaniṣads; the Birla family also has been inspired by it: *Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthāḥ*—'Enjoy through renunciation'. The Upaniṣads do not say, don't enjoy, but enjoy through renunciation. That is the key sentence in the *Īśā Upaniṣad*. Gandhiji often used to quote it. At this time in India, we need this sort of teaching very badly.

Enjoy with zest, says the *Īśā Upaniṣad,* this life of yours, and desire to live the full hundred years, but share your joys with others as well. This is a wonderful philosophy. It is not something of a kill-joy ascetic attitude. You have money, have it and enjoy it, but remember there are others who must also be made to share in that joy. You cannot do it alone. *Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthāḥ* can be a real working philosophy to every human being.

In subsequent ages, Śrī Kṛṣṇa came and developed that great thought into a profound philosophy of life, which you get in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. If that philosophy is properly applied in any society—by the rich, by the poor, by the intellectual, by the housewife—there would be no poverty in that society, no injustice, and no dismal social situation. That is the testament of the *Gītā* itself. The last verse of the *Gītā* gives us that testament:

Yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇaḥ yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ;
tatra śrī vijayo bhūtiḥ dhruvā nītirmatirmama—

'Where there is Kṛṣṇa, the master of yoga, and where there is Arjuna, the hero of action (where these two, contemplation and action, function side by side), in that society, the first fruit will be *Śrī,* wealth (the blessing of the goddess Lakṣmi).'

This is what we are trying to bring to this country in the homes of millions of our people, where there has been no touch of *Śrī* for centuries together. This is the challenge before us today. The second fruit is *Vijaya*—success, victory. Whatever you undertake, leads to success and still more success. The third fruit is *bhūti*—general welfare—Śrī or wealth transformed into *bhūti* or general welfare. And the fourth and last fruit is *dhruvā nīti*—steady justice and ethical awareness. Through constant human concern, and not a cheap cleverness, we enhance each other's life through a just and humane social order. These are the things that we are struggling to achieve for our India today.

During centuries of our political slavery, we could not work out these ideas. We became narrow, self-centred, and lost our energies. Then came the modern challenge—Western culture, British political subjection, and new political and social ideas. In the context of all these, our country is trying to find its footing. We faced the challenge of political subjection successfully and became free thirty-three years ago. But the cultural challenge remains. How shall we face this challenge?

3. *The Modern Challenge and Our Response*

What have we behind us in the past ages that can help us in meeting this challenge? This cultural challenge of the modern West is not from its science and technology or from its humanistic philosophy, but from its philosophy of materialism, which poses a challenge not only to us, but to all humanity. To think of India as something isolated is impossible today. Whatever happens in one part of the world, affects the rest of the world. Such a tremendous mankind-awareness has developed and we have to deal with the problems of man as such, and not of a particular nation.

This subject, *Our Cultural Heritage and the Modern Challenge*, therefore, concerns all of us today in India and all others in the rest of the world. If India can face this challenge successfully and create a pattern of human development and welfare and ethical excellence in our own national context, it will have tremendous impact on the rest of the world. We should never forget that India is a continent and not a tiny little nation. A seventh of the human race is living here. When we solve the problems of this big country according to the light we have received from the past, we shall be helping not only ourselves but others as well. Today, the whole world has that expectation from India. When we travel abroad in all parts of the world, even in the highest intellectual circles, there is this questioning and expectation: 'Which way is India going? What hopes shall we have from the great work that the people of India are doing?' Have we that hope? The world is in a sorry mess; our own country also is in a sorry mess; how shall we bring order out of this chaos? How can we achieve true human welfare in this most difficult period of our history? These are very serious problems which pose a great challenge to our wisdom. Have we got the remedy for these maladies and problems?

These are very valid questions. I can only say, from my studies and travels, that our country has one unique advantage compared to many other countries. We have our problems and many social maladies—enormous poverty, backwardness, human suffering, etc. But along with these maladies, there are also profound remedies available to us in the depth of our cultural heritage. Maladies are present everywhere; even affluence may be a malady in some countries. Ambassador and Economist John Kenneth Galbraith has written on the affluent society and the problems affecting people in such a society.

4. *Adhyātmā-vidyā: Its Wide Practical Relevance*

The remedies we have come from the pure philosophy of man, of man in depth, which has come to us from very ancient times, namely, *Adhyātma-vidyā, or Brahma-vidyā,* which is a very profound science developed ages ago in this country. We have not worked out many of its practical implications till now; but today, that is the challenge before us. Should we keep our philosophy merely for transcendental purposes, other-worldly purposes, as we did till now, or should we use it to deal with human problems down below?

This great challenge is before us. I can assure any serious student of Indian philosophy that when he or she will start studying this great subject, he or she will begin getting the biggest surprise of his or her life. Such a student will realize: What I neglected till now is such a profound theme—the vision of man given in our Upaniṣads 4000 years ago—man as the Ātman, the infinite divine Self. That is the birthright of one and all. Our great spiritual teachers did not tell us about a God sitting far away in the sky outside the universe; they spoke of God in man, in every being. That divine spark is the nature of all of us. It is hidden like a spark in ashes. Remove the ashes, place a few faggots on the spark, and it will blaze up into a fire.

I have found the impact of this profound teaching on the mind and heart of man in my travels in all parts of the world. It immediately touches the heart of every listener—whether in the Western American or European democracies or in the Eastern socialistic states. Everywhere, this study, in depth, of man, and the great vision of human excellence centred round the divine spirit within mankind, is being pursued with great interest and earnestness. It is truly a universal vision of human excellence, and that is why its impact is felt everywhere.

Man, evaluated not in terms of his variable aspects of race, sect, nationality, or any other alienable aspect, but in terms of his inalienable aspect, the one that can never be separated from him, his own true divine nature—that is the great teaching of the Upaniṣads—Man as the infinite, the immortal, and one with all. We are essentially one. What a beautiful vision of human unity, freedom, dignity, and equality it is! This is what *Adhyātma Vidyā* gives to modern humanity. My faith in the great teachings of the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* became thousand-fold when I saw that audiences in all parts of the world, including communist countries, responded to this philosophy with profound spontaneity. This is because it is a teaching about man in depth. What is hidden in him cannot be revealed by his eyes. No physical science can reveal this truth. The senses deal only with the sensory data. Even the telescope and microscope deal only with the sensory data. This truth lies above the sensory dimensions. It comes from a penetrating research into the inner world of man. This is what the ancient sages did, and did so successfully, that their philosophy, the Vedanta, has come to us undimmed in beauty and vigour.

5. *Man: Mortal versus Immortal*

The Upaniṣads discovered the immortal behind the mortal. What a beautiful idea! This human body is mortal. Even the mind is mortal. Behind this mind-body complex, they discovered something profound—not as an opinion, not just as a theory—but as an experience, as a realization. The teachers never say, we *believe* that there is divinity in man, but we have seen, we *have realized,* and you can also realize, this truth. This is a truth about man, and not just a fancy or an opinion. This is the language used in the Upaniṣads.

Today, in Sri Ramakrishna, we find the use of the same language; I have seen, I have realized, God. It is not an opinion. This wonderful study of man is what you get as the science of *Adhyātma-Vidyā*. Humanity needs this teaching everywhere today. Tremendous developments have taken place all over the world through the application of the physical sciences and technology. These are all beautiful developments; but they are being carried too far, and are proving harmful, without the help of the blessings of the science of man in depth. We are experiencing tensions, privations, and psychic distortions in all parts of the world. Something is missing in our understanding of human life and destiny. We can make money, travel far, and enjoy endless sense pleasures, made possible by scientific technology; but in the midst of all the pleasures and excitement, some emptiness creeps into us. At no time in the history of the civilized world has there been such an experience of inner emptiness in the context of great wealth outside, as today. That is the current human situation.

The great German philosopher, Schopenhauer, in the last century, predicted this kind of difficulty coming over the world. His prediction, given in his book *The World as Will and Idea,* over a century ago has become so true today in this 20th century. He said (Vol.I, p.404):

> 'Almost all men who are secure from want and care, now that they have at last thrown off all other burdens, become a burden to themselves.'

This is today's problem in the highly developed societies. Man's problem is man himself, not nature outside; that has been conquered by physical science. He does not know what to do; he is unhappy and tense; and he projects all this outside, creating tension and unhappiness around him.

This is where a certain impoverishment within man is being experienced in all circles in the context of tremenmdous wealth developed externally by science and technology. It is into that context of modern humanity that the ancient spiritual teachings of India bring this light and hope. 'There is a gospel of hope for you, you listen to me, I have a great message for you'—the spirit of India conveys this hopeful message to every child in every part of the world.

In our modern period, the first great proclamation of this message to the world took place through Swami Vivekananda. Appearing before the Chicago World Parliament of Religions in 1893, he pronounced this great blessing by the Indian sages on all humanity:

Śṛṇvantu viśve amṛtasya putrāḥ
āye dhāmāni divyāni tasthuh:
Vedāhametam puruṣaṁ mahāntam
ādityavarnam tamashah parastat;
Tameva viditvā atimṛtyumeti
nānyath panthā vidyate ayanāya—

What language! What strength of conviction! 'Hear me', says the verse from Upaniṣads. 'Oh! Ye children of immortality.' Man—a child of immortality, not a child of darkness, delusion, sin or wickedness. Even those who perform wicked deeds are not essentially wicked, they are a spark of the divine, they are immortal. In no other literature is the dignity and gloryof man upheld so wonderfully as in the great Upaniṣads of India. 'Listen to me', says the sage, I have a gospel for you, good news for you, a message for you, Not only for you, men and women on earth, but also 'for the gods, goddesses, and angels in heaven; *āye dhāmāni divyāni tasthuḥ*. See the courage, see the conviction. Here is a message for everyone, including the gods, goddesses, and angels in heaven. They also forget the great truth by indulging in too much of pleasures and organic satisfactions. Therefore, listen to me, I have a message for you. Then you may ask, what is this message? Is it taken from books or from hearsay or concocted by a fertile brain? No, *vedāhametam*—'I have known this (truth), I have realized this (truth):

The language used in India in this philosophy, from the time of the Vedas upto our own time of Sri Ramakrishna, is not 'I believe' but 'I have realized and you can also realize.' This is a wonderful idea—this *Vedahametam*. And what have you realized? *Puruṣam mahāntam*—'the infinite man' (behind the finite man). This man, conditioned by the organic system, is a tiny little man. It is finite—subject to pressures of internal and external life. But that is not man's true form. What a beautiful idea!

'Vedāhametam, puruṣam mahāntam'. The language is so clear; *purusam*—man, *mahāntam*—infinite—The infinite man behind the finite man. In religion, we call that God. The infinite God is behind your organic system. That is the nature of the message conveyed by the great sages of India to everyone. Never forget your own true nature. Do not confine yourself to this tiny organic system which you can grasp by your senses and sense-bound mind. Within this organic system, and beyond the senses and the mind, there is a focus of infinite value. That is the wonderful language used!

We have been told that science or knowledge destroys fear. Modern scientific developments have made us think so. That is true. Primitive man is full of fear—even thunder or lightning frightens him. As we developed the physical sciences, we could understand the meaning of thunder and lightning and we can now control it and use it for human purpose. This is called science and technology. Therefore, you do not have the fears that frightened the ordinary primitive human beings. We have picked up enough knowledge and we are fearless today. But this is not entirely true. We have overcome certain types of fears, fears that were oppressing the primitive people very much. But we are afflicted by other fears and anxieties. Can we say that the highly civilized man of today is free from fear? He is full of fear, but fear of a different sort, fear proceeding from a different region of experience, namely, the inner world of man.

Anxiety is the word that is used in every literature and every philosophy today. Anxiety, alienation, tension, unfulfilment, etc., are the words that appear again and again in modern literature. *Frustration* is the word that occurs so much in modern literature. So is the word *boredom*. In fact, one English writer has said that the suffering conveyed by the word boredom, that is afflicting people in all highly civilized societies, never afflicted people before 1750; for, in Dr. Johnson's dictionary of the English language, there is no word like boredom! It has only recently been included in dictionaries.

Therefore, we can safely say that scientific knowledge destroys *some* fear *but not all* fear. All fears will only go when you realize this truth that there is the infinite man behind the finite man. This is the language used here, *Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ mahantam.* Then says the verse further: *ādityavarṇam*—'glorious like the sun.' *Tamasaḥ parastāt*—'beyond all darkness', beyond all delusion.' Then comes the fine touch, a scientific touch:

The teacher did not say, 'I have realized this truth, you only believe in me and you will be saved.' He never said so, but he said: 'You can also realize it.' My realization does not make you fearless and fulfilled. You have to realize it yourself. *Tameva viditvā atimṛtyumeti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya*—'It is when you realize this profound truth that you transcend death (and become truly fearless and strong); there is no other way to fulfilment.' This is the great message which our *Adhyātma*-vidyā started conveying to humanity since 4000 years ago.

Man is a meeting point of creaturliness and freedom. Says India's great epic, *The Mahābhārata* (Bhandarkar edition, XII. 169. 28):

Amṛtam caiva mṛtyuśca
dvayam dehe pratiṣṭhitaṁ;
*Mṛtyur*āpadyate mohāt
satyenāpadyate' mṛtam—

'Both immortality and mortality are established in the body (of everyone); by (pursuit of) delusion, one reaches death; by (pursuit of) truth, one attains the immortal.'

India has cherished, nourished, and developed this great philosophy, not only through the sages of the Upaniṣads but also all through the subsequent ages, when it produced gigantic personalities who lived this philosophy and gave it to humanity. That is why India is a special laboratory for this great scientific purpose. There is a vast area of application for this profound philosophy. We should know its true nature and then express it in various fields of life; we should work out the practical implications of this profound vision in this modern age.

6. *The 'Imprisoned Splendour' in Man*

We live on this tiny little earth and yet we quarrel and fight. We exploit each other. Why? Because we think that we are tiny little creatures and try to spit venom on each other. This is not the way to live. Extend love to all. The same Ātman is in everyone. Spread love, justice, compassion, the spirit of service, etc. These are the products of this vision of man—of his excellence, and of his infinite nature. A touch of that infinite nature can give us high character, great strength, compassion, and spirit of service.

But how to apply it? To this question, India gave the answer through Śri Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*—a practical philosophy of life for everyone—the housewife, the labourer, the administrator, the politician, the scientist, and everyone else. This truth is a universal truth, a profound truth, but hidden, in man. He has only to unfold it. The words used in the Upaniṣads are exactly like the ones we use in English: 'Unfolding the truth that is already present in you.'

The divine spark in every human being, as Swami Vivekananda has said, is the challenge before us. This is the 'Imprisoned Splendour' in man, in the language of Robert Browning's poem *Paracelsus*. This profound science of the Atman, the science of man in depth, is a science which can destroy all fears. Physical sciences can destroy some fears but not all. We want to destroy all fears. Why not use the physical sciences to destroy the fears that we have in our outer life arising from the outer world, and use this profound science of man in depth to destroy the fears arising from the inner world and afflicting both our inner and outer lives?

This kind of teaching finds response from the hearts of people in all parts of the world. India's *Adhyātma vidyā* is well founded in the true nature of man. Proclaims the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (3.12):

Eṣa sarveṣu bhūteṣu gūḍho ātmā na prakaśate;
Dṛśyate tvagryayā buddhyā
sūkṣmayā sūkṣhma-darśibhiḥ

This is a profound verse of the Upaniṣads: 'This divine Ātman is present in all beings but it lies hidden and, therefore, it does not manifest to our sensory verification.' To our question: Will it always remain hidden? No; man has the organic capacity, which nature has provided, with which to seek and realize it. So the verse says: *dṛśyate*—'it *can be* realized.' In the *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā* and in the *Gītā,* it is said that hundreds have realized this truth and it is not something strange. *Dṛśyate*—'it can be realized,' but how? *Agryayā buddhyā*—'with the buddhi which is sharp'; when the mind becomes well trained, it develops the capacity to penetrate into the heart of truth; it will be revealed 'to those subtle seers who develop their reason to perceive subtle and subtler truths'—*Agryayā buddhya, sūkṣmayā, sūkṣma-darśibhiḥ.* Then only can reason realize this subtle truth. These eyes can only see the gross truth. I can see, touch, and handle the table but when you go into the heart of nature, you come across subtler and subtler truths. When you go into the heart of man, you come across subtler and subtler dimensions of the human personality, subtler and subtler energies sleeping within every human being. Muscular energy is gross, psychic energy is more subtle and pervasive, but energy coming from the Atman in man is supreme and makes man supremely fearless.

One profound idea that is found only in the Upaniṣads, in the Vedāntic tradition of this country, is that man is highest and best when he truly becomes fearless. All creatures are afflicted with fear. Man ceases to be a victim of fear when he ceases to be a creature; or he ceases to be a creature when he becomes fearless. This fearlessness is the goal of man. God is described in the Upanisads as *The Fearless,* and when you attain Him you also become fearless. *Abhayam vai brahma*—'Brahman is fearlessness': and when you attain Brahman, you become fearless. When you realize this infinite reality, all fear goes away.

This is a lesson for the whole world. We in this modern civilization are full of fear today and we have all sorts of them. Though we have overcome the primitive man's fears, thousands of other fears have crept into us—various forms of anxiety and neurotic fears.

This philosophy has a wide reference, not only for man in India but in all parts of the world. The divine spark is there in man. When I addressed the Moscow State University in October 1977, reference to this truth elicited an important question. The reference to the divine spark in man, as taught by the ancient Vadānta and by Swami Vavekananda in the modern period, elicited a question on this important subject from the audience of professors, students, research scholars, etc. They asked: 'Swami, you speak of the divine spark in man. Is there such a focus. We are interested in this subject'. 'Yes', I said, 'that is what our whole tradition tells us. Man is essentially divine. He can manifest it little by little in the midst of his life and work'. This is the theme of the practical yoga philosophy of the *Gītā* This elicits response from every human being, because it is about man himself and not from dull dead nature.

7. *Eternal India versus Contemporary India*

We need to face this challenge very much in India. The challenges that face us in India today must be met by us with the counter challenge of the profoundest of wisdom that has been given to us in our tradition. In the modern period. the biggest challenge to India is how to create a healthy body-politic for the ever-healthy soul of India. The body, the society, of India is unhealthy, but the soul of India is healthy and pure. India has an immortal soul. Any study of Indian History will reveal that the soul of India has always been healthy, pure, strong, and fascinating. It has fascinated every contemporary civilization.

From the brilliant minds of the ancient Greeks upto the modern Western peoples, everyone has been fascinated by the soul of India. This soul has produced the sages of the Upanisads, Buddha, Śaṅkarācārya, and many other lovable saints of the past ages, and Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and others in the present age. What a beautiful soul India has! My experience throughout the world is that our India is rightly called eternal India, immortal India, *amara bhārata*. Throughout the ages, it has attracted the attention of all the contemporary civilizations, and it is doing the same in this modern period also.

If you go abroad as a representative of this *amara bhārata,* you are highly respected everywhere. If you go as a representative of contemporary India that we have around us — poor, struggling for development, backward, etc., your are only pitied and not respected.

Today, the challenge to us is: Can we change this contemporary India in terms of the vision of that eternal India? Can we embody that vision in our social experiment? This is a tremendous challenge. To every educated citizen of India today, his or her country must become a mighty anthropological laboratory to experiment on human development for a seventh of the human race. This is the challenge to be faced by all of us today.

Our philosophy is great, and we have produced great sages. What does all that matter to the millions of people, who have no food to eat, no work, and no dwelling to live in? This question has to be faced. Fortunately, every great leader that appeared in the modern period, including non–political leaders like Swami Vivekananda, was seized of this economic and social problem of India. Our society is riven with caste divisions, exploitation of the weaker sections, widespread illiteracy and poverty. Every modern Indian leader has turned his or her attention to this great human problem, and treated it as the greatest challenge to national wisdom. We all talk of our great philosophy and profound vision; but it is far up above. Down below, nothing of it is felt. None felt this contrast and contradiction in India between high vision and low practice as Vivekananda. In a letter written in 1893 from America to India, he said (Complete Works, Vol.V, p.15):

> 'No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism!'

This contrast, this contradiction, this tragic paradox, must be resolved in this modern period. That is the challenge before all of us.

Can we apply this philosophy, this wisdom of eternal India, to remove the sufferings of the people, and to create a healthy society inspired with the spirit of equality, freedom, and human dignity? Great sentiments of this nature have been expressed in our Indian Constitution. Can we translate the visions of the Constitution into real facts of daily life? That is really the big challenge. Here, we need to learn to orient the teachings of the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* in terms of the practical requirements of the people.

Vivekananda has said that Practical Vedānta is the theme of the whole *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Once we grasp this teaching and try to live it, the first fruit will be 'faith in oneself'—the feeling—I can, I can. infinite energy is in me. Vivekananda had emphasized this *ātma* *śraddhā*— faith in oneself. With this faith in oneself we can even move mountains. That is the faith we have to capture and then translate that faith into real action.

8. '*Yogaḥ Karmasu Kauśalam*'

The *Gītā* is a profound philosophy, particularly because it is centred in action. It treats *man at work* as its central theme, unlike all our other books on religion, where *man at leisure, man in meditation and at prayer,* is the theme. Man at work, the labourer breaking stones on the roadside or working in a factory, the administrator working in an office, the housewife at home, is the theme of the *Gītā*. Kṛṣṇa whispers to every working man or woman :In the midst of your work, your day–to–day life, if you can orient all this in terms of all-round human development—human development around you and spiritual development within you—you are my true friend and disciple. This is the meaning of the yoga expounded by Kṛṣṇa from the second chapter onwards. Says verse 50 of the second chapter, defining yoga: '*Yogaḥ Karmasu Kauśalam*'—'Yoga is efficiency in action'. It is a double efficiency: By being a productive individual, you develop the economic and social strength and raise the human situation around you; by enriching your inner life, you develop your own spiritual strength. Get in touch with the Atman, your true nature, little by little, in and through your life and actions, and you will achieve life fulfilment in a profound way *in this very life.* What a beautiful concept of efficiency! We study the subject of efficiency in modern industry, administration, and elsewhere, mostly as an external reference. How much do you produce and what work have you done? Never does anyone ask: through the work you do, are you stronger, purer, are you more fulfilled? In the efficiency concept of the *Gita,* both these aspects are contained. Be efficient, not only as a producer of goods and services for the benefit of the community, but also be efficient through a sense of inner enrichment in the context of your work, so that that work will leave you as a fulfilled individual, not a frustrated empty individual.

This is a beautiful philosophy of life in which the socio–political ideas and the ethical—spiritual ideas become sythesized in a unifying vision of man and his destiny. Man is not like a machine to be used and thrown away. He has a destiny of his own. He cannot be a mere nut or bolt in a machine, though that is the tendency today. In fact, the mechanization of man has already gone very far in the modern period through reliance solely on modern physical science and technology and the philosophy of materialism they foster.

Even agnostics like the late Bertrand Russell protested against this mechanization of the human spirit. In fact, in some of his post-war lectures, he says that very soon a time will come when man will forget that he is a man and has a soul. He will consider himself only as a part of a machine.Says he (*Impact of Science on Society*, pp.80—81, Blackie & Son Publishers, 1981):

> 'You may view an individual, a) as a common man, b) as a hero, c) as a cog in the machine. ...
>
> 'In a good social system, every man will be at once a hero, a common man, and a cog, to the greatest possible extent. ...
>
> 'The cog theory, though mechanically feasible, is humanily the most devastating of the three. ... In time, men will come to pray to the machine: "Almighty and most merciful Machine, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost screws: we have put in those nuts which we ought not to have put in, and we have left out those nuts which we ought to have put in, and there is no cogginess in us"—and so on. The idolatry of the machine is and abomination. The Machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism.'

Every morning, when he goes to work in the big factory, he will stand before the huge machine and realize that he is a tiny thing by its side; he will then offer flowers to the machine and pray to it, 'Oh machine, make me an efficient cog in your system!'

This kind of belittling of man is already taking place in many areas. The only message that can rescue man from this catastrophe is the Vedāntic message of the Ātman, the eternal, ever-free, and immortal spiritual dimension of man. This is the great teaching of India's *adhyātma-vidyā*.

9. *True Education*

The entire world needs this teaching. But we in India need it more, because the character we have exhibited ever since our independence is a flimsy character, our life is a mere skipping on the surface, with no depth. Our education has lost depth; what it gives us is some smattering of information but not true knowledge, and it does not *train our minds,* it only *stuffs our brains,* without giving culture. Culture comes to us through a higher dimension of education which touches the very soul of man.

Culture means humanness, it means courtesy and manners, and not crudeness. Education of today not only fails to train the mind, but also fails to touch that dimension of culture. The result is that we are very cheap human beings without the enlivening touch of the depth of the human spirit. This has to be changed. 650 million people—immense humanity—it should be made solid within and solid without. What a beautiful development it will be! This will never come about unless we use this secular education to train our minds in concentration, precision in thinking and in speaking, and in applying knowledge to practical situations. We should, side by side, realize the divine spark within us. That is true education. Even a little awareness of this ever-present datum in us can give us a high character and a trustworthiness that we are missing very badly today. We think only of business and money-making in every department of life, including education, and there is no mutual trust. This way, man has devalued himself terribly. That again is a big challenge before us. How can we revalue ourselves?

Go through the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* and try to assimilate the teachings contained therein. Study the most strengthening literature of Vivekananda—man-making literature, nation-building literature. These are the terms used by Vivekananda himself—man-making and nation-building education and religion. *svalpamapy-asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*—'even a little of this dharma can save us from great fear'—says Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā*. This bigness must come to every citizen from the bigness that is within all of us as the one infinite Ātman. I am not a tiny organic system, not a little ego presiding over that organic system. I am the Ātman and we are essentially one.

10. *The Vedāntic Truth of 'Tat Tvam Asi'*

This is a profound truth. It is amazing to see that some of the profound truths of our *adhyātma-vidyā* are being voiced by great nuclear scientists today. Having penetrated to the nucleus of matter, they are amazed to find that these ancient sages of India had penetrated to the nucleus of man and discovered this profound truth, conveyed by them in the great dictum of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad: Tat Tvam Asi*—That Thou Art'. You are not what you appear to you through your sensory system, you have a higher dimension, an infinite dimension. You are essentially divine. You can teach this truth to every child; and it will realize it every time it unfolds some talent or capacity, some virtue, some beauty of character.

I have particularly noted two great scientists who have quoted this *Tat Tvam Asi* in their writings or speeches. One was Shrodinger, the great wave mechanics nuclear scientist. Just before he published his great scientific discoveries, he discovered this truth, in the 1920's. He referred to *Tat Tvam Asi*—a profound truth. Man is infinite. Vedānta asks us not to measure him in terms of his organic system. It is flimsy; a little extra heat or cold can destroy it. There is something else to man, something infinite.

The second scientist was a molecular biologist, the late J.B.S.Haldane, who left England after the war and settled down in Bhubaneshwar in India, conducted his research, and passed away there. Speaking on *Unity and Diversity of Life,* he said (quoted by R.B.Lal in his *Gita in the Light of Modern Science* (p.25):

> 'On the walls of the large room in the zoological laboratory at Munster (West Germany), where professor Rensch keeps his living animals, are written the words *Taṭ Tvam Asi* (That (infinite and pure Atma) thou art). If I have helped any of you to understand some of the implications of this great saying, my lectures have not been in vain.'

He saw the profundity of this truth about man given in that tiny formula, just as he had appreciated the modern nuclear science formula for the energy contained in a small piece of matter. Though the little lump of matter is limited, the energy inside it is unlimited. Similarly, looking at man, the great sages said that even a new born baby is not a flimsy thing, though physically it appears so. But, there is much energy concealed in that flimsy exterior, and it has to be taught to unfold it day by day. This is the spiritual dimension—the divine dimension—over and above the physical and psychical dimensions of every human being.

Today's helpless baby is tomorrow's world boxing champion Mohammed Ali, scientist Einstein, Spiritual teacher Buddha or Vivekananda. The Upaniṣads teach that infinite energy is lying hidden in everyone of us. That is the truth about man, says the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad: Eṣa sarveṣu bhūteṣu gūḍho ātmā na prakāśate*—'This Atman is present in all beings, but lies hidden, not manifest'. Tremendous energy is hidden in everyone of us. Let this life be a process of unfolding this tremendous energy. First physical energy, then mental energy, and then, slowly, the spiritual energy should be unfolded. When this happens, man achieves steady life fulfilment. The great goal of human life is—fulfilment. This fulfilment must come to everyone. Vedānta proclaims that it is the birthright of everyone. This body is the most precious instrument that nature has manufactured. It is the only instrument that can understand the mysteries of nature, its creator. All other bodies are only the objects of nature, creatures of nature.

11. *The Science of Human Possibilities*

Our teachers knew the rich and beautiful possibilities of the human organic system. They present Vedānta as *the science of human possibilities*. They ask everyone to try and unveil the truth within themselves, in the very context of their life; they have not to go to the forest to do it, they can realize the truth about themselves wherever they are, because it is the birthright of all, none has to beg for it. It is this philosophy that can energize young people today. This will lead to their physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. That will develop in them strength of character, efficiency, and love and compassion.

Very few know this truth of Vedānta and the possibility of its practical application, even in our own country. What we call religion in India is mostly a few superstitions, a little magic and miracle, and some anti-human social practices. Even intellectuals in our country never knew the profound dimensions of their Vedānta, their *adhyātma-vidyā.* I often used to wonder how even our intellectuals and pandits understood their religion in childish ways. They go to holy Hardwar, pay five rupees to a *panda,* or priest, catch hold of the tail of a cow, and they expect to go to heaven! This is considered religion! In this way, the whole nation was brought down to such flimsy ideas. No wonder our country is in such a sorry state. Flimsy philosophy or religion gives only flimsy life.

Let them hear today this lion roar of their Vedānta. This is the traditional language used while referring to Vedānta.

Tāvad garjanti śāstrāni jaṁbukā vipine yathā;
na garjanti mahāśaktiḥ yāvad vedāntakesari—

'Other systems of philosophy or religion go on roaring, like foxes (howling) in a forest, till the lion of Vedānta begins its mighty roar!''

Therefore Vivekananda said: let the lion of Vedānta roar; the foxes of pettiness, fear, and hatred will fly to the holes. They will vanish once for all. He said that it is this lion of Vedānta that must roar today throughout the nation so that the children, who are heirs to greatness, will unfold that greatness steadily, and will not remain foxy and clever; will not remain small-minded and petty, spitting venom on each other, cheating each other, and bringing nemesis to this whole country. That is unfortunately what we are doing today. We lack character, mutual respect and trust, and the spirit of service and dedication. All these beautiful things, now lacking in us, will come to us in a big way, when a bit of the energy of the Ātman, present behind the intellect, finds manifestation through the intellect and the life of man.

This is the way we can meet this challenge and build up a body-politic in India inspired by these great ideals of human freedom, equality, and dignity. What a beautiful idea! It is not an utopian idea. Many other nations have achieved these things in some measure, and we too can achieve them here. They have achieved much human development even though they lack the deeper awareness of man's true nature, man's nature as the infinite divine Atman. Modern India will offer this truth to everyone, and realize its implications herself. This is the exchange of ideas between culture and culture. We are taking from the West physical sciences, technology, democratic politics and adminstration, as the tools by which we are building a new body-politic for our nation. We have to retain our soul in the course of doing so. We extend the blessing of this profound vision to the rest of the world in obligation to what they have given to us. They have given us so much in the modern period; here is something we offer to them; it may do good to them. With that humble attitude, India shares its profound vision of human dignity and glory as given in the Upaniṣads with the rest of the world.

This way, we can identify the challenges and try to meet them step by step. It is the subject that should form the theme of discussions in colleges and universities. What is our culture, what is our heritage, what is the challenge we have to meet, and how shall we meet that challenge? What are the thought resources that we have and what are the resources we have to choose from the West. This should be the central theme of all education today so that an educated individual helps the nation to solve its problems, and not as it is today, himself adding one more problem to the nation. And today, everywhere, he and his eduacation have become the nation's additional problem. Educational institutions have become one of the biggest problems of India today. Instead of solving the national problems, they have themselves become the big problem. What a tragedy! How can that education be true education? Hence says Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on *Vedānta and Its Application to Indian Life (Comp. Works,* Vol.III, p. 247):

> 'Bring light into the world. Light, bring light! Let light come unto every one; the task will not be finished till every one has reached the Lord.
>
> 'Bring light to the poor; and bring more light to the rich; for they require it more than the poor. Bring light to the ignorant, and more light to the educated, for the vanities of the education of our time are tremendous!
>
> 'Thus bring light to all and leave the rest unto the Lord.'

Vidyā means knowledge, science, or education, and the student is known as *vidyārthi*—the seeker of knowledge or science; everyone as a seeker of knowledge. What is *vidyā?* That which makes you free and liberated, What a beautiful concept of *vidyā* we have in our Vedic literature!

Here is a challenge that should be comprehended in all its dimensions by every one of us. Once that comes, one big result will come to this country, namely, there will be no frustration, or very much less of it. Most of the frustrations today come from the attitude that 'my country is not doing enough for me.' This is our frustration. It is compounded of another attitude also: I have no responsibility to my society and my people. Therefore, frustrations come, must come. This will change when I feel that I belong to my country and will do everything to make things brighter and brighter for my country. Such an attitude alone can help us to face up to these challenges and emerge, by the end of this century, not only as the *largest* democracy but also as the *greatest* democracy in the world.

12. *Conclusion*

Greatness to a democracy comes when pressing human problems have been solved, and human development has been achieved. Until then, we have only the dubious title of the *largest* democracy in the world. It is not a very happy title to us. We want to become the *greatest* democracy. That will come when the Vedāntic strength and character-efficiency and the modern scientific and practical strength and efficiency combine together in the mind, heart, and character of everyone of us. Then we shall catch up with our national problems and solve them steadily.

That testament of the last verse of the *Gītā* which I quoted in the beginning of my talk will not then remain a mere testament, but will be a realized fact in the actual human situation in our country. I do hope that, as years pass, and as this great 20th century rolls to its final end, we shall be catching up with, and solving, our human problems, shall be more thoughtful, and turn to our own heritage to understand and apply the remedies it has for the good of mankind, and thus become the instruments of human purposes, national and international. Thank you all.

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EDUCATION IN THE LIGHT OF A SCIENCE OF MAN IN DEPTH*

1. *Introduction*

This subject of education is of very special interest to us, because ours is a developing country; and the word 'development' refers particularly to human development. Whether it is our economics or politics, whether it is our industry or science or technology, the main object of all these is to ensure human development of India. We have quantitatively about 700 million people, but quality is lacking; and behind that lack is lack of education, if we understand education in the correct sense and also in the context of twentieth-century thought, particularly biological thought.

Study of man is a profound science in itself. You must remember that this country of ours has devoted a good deal of time and energy to the study of man. We see the Western countries today highly developed. That development has come not primarily through the study of man, but through the study of external nature. Such a study gets reflected in man also, because he lives in the physical environment. But the study of man and the science of his possibilities are very much neglected in modern Western culture, compared to its study of external nature. It is that neglect that is being corrected by the Western people today; and they ask India's help to the true understanding of man and his possibilities.

2. *India's Adhyātma-vidyā and Modern Human Distortions*

Any education of man or any philosophy of society, to be adequate, must have behind it a *science of man in depth*. In terms of that science of man alone can you develop an adequate philosophy of society, of culture, and everything relating to human development and fulfilment. The Western people have developed a concept of man which is rather inadequate, as they themselves admit. I am quoting from the biologist late Sir Julian Huxley who had said: We have only scratched the surface of the science of mind. That scratching has given the Western man a knowledge of man's physiology; of his anatomy of his neurology; and also a bit of his behaviouristic psychology. But what is the depth dimension of man? This is the Western thought did not know, did not also care to know. That is why, towards the end of the last century, Western psychology was considered to be revolutionized when Freud discovered the subconscious and the unconscious behind the conscious. The study of man in depth in the West was initiated by Freud from that period. But, to us in India, this has been for a few thousand years, since the age of the Upaniṣads, the main occupation—the study of man in depth; and we have developed a profound science of man and his possibilities as a result of our scientific investigation in this field.

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* Based on the tape record of the speech given on 23rd July 1981 at the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira (college), Belur Math, West Bengal, under the college Humanities and Social Sciences Improvement Programme sponsored by the University Grants Commission

We call this science *adhyātma-vidyā* or *ātma-vidyā*. And today, it is true, literally, that in high educational institutions and in psycho-therapy circles in the West, there is a profound interest in, and respect for, India's science of man in depth.

Western people have problems of man to face much more interactable than we have in our country. It is true that they have no problems relating to food, shelter, clothing, and education, such as we have in our country; these are the problems we are now trying to overcome through the help of science and technology learnt by us sitting at the feet of the West. But they have more serious problems relating to man's inner life; they are confronted with many psychic distortions. Today, therefore, there is re-thinking in the West on the subject of man, his possibilities, his destiny, and the education that a human being should get in order to achieve a measure of individual and social wellbeing and fulfilment. When you find a highly developed society faced with ever-increasing rates of delinquency, drug addition, drunkenness, and suicide, when all such problems afflict a human society, certainly the thinking people in that society would be compelled to ask this question: 'Have we understood man correctly? How shall we handle these problems? Can physical science and its technology alone help us to tackle these distortions? Should we not seek for a deeper science of man than what we possess? Whenever they ask this kind of question and seek for an answer, they turn to our country and find that India has a profound science and philosophy of man in depth which does not contradict, but only complement, their own great sciences of physical nature.

Let us not forget, in this context, the historic fact that we in India did not neglect the physical sciences in the beginning. We had developed many physical sciences and contributed to human scientific knowledge many fundamental scientific concepts and terminologies. But, later on, we concentrated our energies on man, his inner development and fulfilment. The result was partly good and partly bad; the bad consequence was the gradual neglect by our nation of the sciences of physical nature. That lies behind India's later poverty and social stagnation. The good consequence was that our men and women became more peaceful, more tolerant, more fulfilled, more cultured, more inwardly rich, though poor in pocket, than even many well-to-do peoples of Western societies today. This is literally true that, in spite of wealth, in spite of power, in spite of high education, there is much anxiety and nervous tension in men and women and even children in the West. Almost every second person has got some nervous problem or the other. That is why they seek to study India's contributions to this great subject of man. And, based on these contributions, India had developed her concepts and techniques of human education which are designed to help man to achieve inner enrichment and peace along with wealth and organic satisfactions in man's external life. The Western world is now experiencing a growing interest in this comprehensive approach to education, especially those in the West who think dispassionately, those who question their own assumptions, and those who get the opportunity to come in touch with the deeper levels and spiritual dimensions of Indian thought.

3. *Knowledge versus Wisdom*

They come across new inspiring ideas in Vedānta and yoga; and they are trying to understand man from a deeper dimension than what they have done till now. They had viewed man till now only from the outside. That touched only his surface dimension. And in spite of all the current education in the West, based on that surface view of man—and even the Freudian depth view of man is only a surface view from the point of view of the Indian depth study of man—the more educated often means only the more complex and unintegrated in mind. Simple minds are better than unintegrated educated minds; so that, the educated person is full of unintegrated energies within, because he or she is merely strong intellectually. So even the late Bertrand Russell, a brilliant intellectual and not a man of religion but a thorough-going agnostic, said (*Impact of Science on Society,* p. 121):

> 'Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.'

What a beautiful idea! Now, the idea in this sentence is a modern echo of one of the great ideas in our ancient Upaniṣads. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* seventh chapter, the opening passage presents before us a highly educated student by name Nārada approaching a great spiritual teacher by name Sanatkumāra and saying to him: 'O Blessed One, I am full of sorrow (in spite of all my intellectual knowledge): and I have heard from great teachers like you that he who knows his own infinite Self alone, and none else, can cross over sorrow. So, O Blessed One, please take me across this ocean of sorrow.' Then Sanatkumāra asks him: 'Please tell me what you already know.' Nārada then enumerates a number of subjects which he has studied, including the Vedas, history, and other positivistic sources of knowledge; and the teacher remarks: 'Yes, you know much; but *nāmaiva tat*—'they are all mere words, words, words!' Education has to go beyond words to meaning, beyond knowledge to wisdom.

4. *Parā-Vidyā and Aparā-Vidyā*

Now when you keep in the background what Bertrand Russell, echoing the deep-felt urges of the modern Western peoples, said, and then turn to the Upaniṣads, you find the same beautiful idea expressed in the same language, though Russell cannot help you to understand what is exactly meant by this 'wisdom'. So Indian tradition upholds that there are two types of knowledge for man to acquire: one is knowledge, the other is matured knowledge, when knowledge becomes wisdom. Science or knowledge is called *vidyā* in Sanskrit. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad,* chapter one, there is this anecdote: A student goes to a teacher and asks him:

kasmin nu bhagavo vijñāte sarvam idam vijñātam bhavati—

‘What is that (truth), O Blessed One, by knowing which one can know everything in *this manifested* universe? The word *idam, this,* is a technical term in Sanskrit meaning this manifested universe which you experience as an object. Everything in this world including the body, sense organs, the sun, moon and stars—all these are denoted by the simple word *idam, this.* This question is an inquiry into the One behind the manifold *idam.* To this question comes a beautiful answer from the teacher:

‘Two kinds of science or knowledge are to be inquired into (by man), so say the sages who know (the truth of) Brahman, the ultimate Reality; one is called *aparā-vidyā,* ordinary knowledge, the other is called *parā-vidyā,* higher knowledge.’

Both are sciences, but the first deals with the world of change, with the *loka,* i.e., reality as revealed by the five senses and by instruments helpful to the senses; the other deals with what is changeless, with the *lokātīta* or *lokottara,* i.e., reality that is transcendental, eternal, that lies beyond the reach of the senses and the sense-bound mind. All the sacred books of the world, the teacher means to say, like the Vedas, the Koran, the Bible, then astronomy, and other sciences, linguistics, grammar, etc.—in fact, all positivistic knowledge—belong to the category of *aparā-vidyā.*

5. *The Scientific Temper of the Indian Sages*

The Upaniṣadic teacher is detached, scientific, and bold; he includes even the Vedas in this ordinary knowledge category, in spite of the high esteem in which these sacred books are held by him and his nation. What boldness, arising from single-minded love of truth and scientific detachment, you find in the thinking of these sages of the Upaniṣads! In no other religious tradition will you find this scientific temper and courage. One’s own sacred book is always the highest to the followers of any religion. Not so to these Hindu sages. Even the sacred books to them are ordinary knowledge, *aparā-vidyā.* That this scientific temper is a hoary tradition in

India is verified by what Sri Ramakrishna says in our own time: In the Vedas and other scriptures, you do not get God, but only *information about* God; they are just like the Hindu *pañjika* or almanac, which often contains forecast of the rainfall of the year—this year, there will be so many centimetres of rainfall. But, adds Sri Ramakrishna, if you squeeze the *pañjika,* you won't get a single drop of water! Likewise, if you squeeze the Vedas or other sacred books, you won't get that imperishable Reality, that *parā-vidyā,* or wisdom, which the teacher in that Upaniṣad defines as: *yayā tadakṣaram adhigamyate*—'by which that imperishable Reality can be realized,' and which can be got only by squeezing your own experience, by inquiry into the depth dimension of your personality. This kind of boldness arising from love of truth, which you saw in Sri Ramakrishna in our own time, was there in the philosophical and religious tradition of India from the time of the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, which exhort the seeker to go beyond even the Vedas. The Vedas themselves declare (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad,* 4.3.22): *Vedo avedo bhavati*—'(to the knower of Truth), the Vedas become irrelevant'; the *Gītā* similarly declares in Śri Kṛṣṇa's exhortation to Arjuna (II.45): *Traiguṇya viṣayā Vedā nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna*—'The Vedas deal with the three *guṇas;* you go beyond the three *guṇas,* O Arjuna!'

Again (VI.44):

jijñāsurapi yogasya śabda-brahmātivartate—

'Even an inquirer into *yoga* goes beyond the (do's and don'ts of the) Vedas'.

You transcend the scriptures, with their do's and don'ts and all these static traditions, when you become an *experimenter* in the science of spirituality; and when you experience the truth for yourself, then alone do attain to the knowledge of God, knowledge of the *akṣara,* the imperishable Reality, which is the subject of *parā-vidyā,* wisdom. Knowledge rising to wisdom is only when you begin to *experience* the profound truth about yourself, that behind and beyond these passing configurations of your psycho-physical individuality, you realize the one infinite imperishable Atman.

6. *When all knowing Tends to be Being*

I wish to tell you the Vedantic way of conveying this truth in one small sentence: In all scientific investigations into the inner dimension of man, which is also the inner dimension of nature—for man is nature's finest product of evolution—every *knowing* tends to be *being;* to know it, is to *be* it. In no physical science is this true. If you know the table, you don't become the table, when you know the sun, you don't become the sun. But in the science of the inner nature of man, when you know the Atman, you become the Atman, when you know God, you *become* God, or become God-like. What a beautiful idea! Here you find speculative knowledge becoming experiential knowledge; this is what Vedanta calls knowledge maturing into wisdom.

Is there anything *akṣara,* imperishable, in this world of *kṣara* or perishable things? Is there anything permanent in this world of change? That is the constant scientific and philosophical question. In many Upaniṣads you come across this question and the way the sages investigated it and found the answer. In modern Western thought also, you come across this question. All science is the search for the imperishable behind the perishable, for the absolute behind the relative. What is the imperishable? Everything in the universe is perishable. The whole galactic system is perishable. So are our own bodies. Only through the pursuit of Truth into the depth level of experience, says Vedānta, will you get the imperishable and the immortal. You realize yourself as truly the immortal. I am not this body. This is changing; this is perishable. But I am the infinite Atman; I am the Self; I am Śiva, I am Śiva! That wonderful knowledge is not second-hand knowledge but first-hand or direct experience. Here knowledge becomes experience. 'There is the Atman in me' is only an information. But 'I am the Atman' is an experience; and experience at the *parā* knowledge or trans-sensory knowledge level is what makes for wisdom.

7. *The Advaitic Vision in Vedānta and Modern Science*

This is how the Upaniṣads describe this inquiry into the wonderful depth-nature of man, which is also the depth-nature of the universe, for nature has a *within* dimension which is revealed in her highest evolutionary product, namely, man. This infinite Atman is behind the whole universe as Pure Consciousness; behind everything is an ocean of the energy of Pure Consciousness—*parā-ŝakti, cit-ŝakti, cit-swarūpā*—these are the words you will find used in the *Devī-Māhātmyam* and other Vedānta books. You will find therein God spoken as the Divine Mother of the universe, as the *Adyā-Ŝakti,* the Primordial Divine Energy, of the nature of Pure Consciousness.

You will find many such beautiful and meaningful verses in these great Vedānta books. Therefore, on the one side, there is the imperishable reality of Pure and non-dual Consciousness at the depth and, on the other side, there are these ever-changing perishable manifestations of that Reality on the surface. These are the two dimensions of reality; the latter belong to the world of the knowable *object;* the former belongs to the dimension of the knower, the *subject* of knowledge, in which, as said earlier, all knowledge ever consummates itself in being, in experience. In that experience, achieved in varying degrees, lies human wisdom and fulfilment. Even a glimpse of that truth, as the *Gītā* expresses it in its second chapter, confers great strength and fearlessness—

svalpamapyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt.

When you study physics of this twentieth century, you will find this Advaitic vision coming there once again. The universe of daily experience presents a vast diversity of apparently stable molecular structures; but when physics probes the universe deeper and deeper, it comes across an undifferentiated quantum energy field. There are both these—energy field below and the material molecular structures above. What is the nature of these two? Let Einstein speak (quoted in M. Capek: *The Philosophical Impact of Contemporary Physics,* p. 319):

> There is no place in this new kind of physics both for the field and matter, for the field is the only reality.'

8. *Emerging Importance of the Datum of Consciousness in Modern Science*

Vedānta uses the word *consciousness-field* in place of the *physi-*

cal energy-field of physics. To the question: What is the nature of that field? Vedānta gives the answer: It is Pure Consciousness. And today, even in nuclear physics, a little bit of this datum of consciousness is penetrating in its effort to interpret nuclear phenomena. In fact, when physics deals with nuclear phenomena, this subject of consciousness of the observer always comes up in trying to interpret the observed data. As physicist Eugene Wigner puts it *(Symmetries and Reflections—Scientific Essays,* p. 172):

> 'It was not possible to formulate the laws (of quantum theory) in a fully consistent way without reference to consciousness.'

Nuclear phenomena are altered by the very act of observation by the observer, so that the word 'observer' has become insufficient and a more meaningful word, *participator,* has been suggested by physicist John Wheeler (Quoted in *The Physicists' Conception of Nature,* Edited by J. Mehra, p. 244):

> 'Nothing is more important about the quantum principle than this that it destroys the concept of the world as 'sitting out there', with the observer safely separated from it by 20 centimetre slab of plate glass. Even to observe so miniscule an object as an electron, he must shatter the glass. He must reach in. He must install his chosen measuring equipment. It is up to him to decide whether he shall measure position or momentum. To install the equipment to measure the one prevents and excludes his installing the equipment to measure the other. Moreover, the measurement changes the state of the electron. The universe will never afterwards be the same. To describe what has happened, one has to cross out that old word 'observer', and put in its place the new word 'participator'. In some strange sense, the universe is a participatory universe.'

Now, I am only pointing out this unique and revolutionary situation in modern physics in order to show, that at the farthest reach of modern physical science, it is coming in touch with a new dimension of reality, namely, consciousness. And physics, or science in general, can't ignore it hereafter. Today, you have to reckon with it. And in Indian thought, in our Vedānta, we did this ages ago; we discovered that the whole universe is but ever-changing waves and waves in an infinite and non-dual Consciousness-field.

This then the new situation in the world of science, in the world of knowledge, so that even from the point of view of physical science, our concept of education must take into account not only the *observed* external world but also the *observer* inner world, something deep within man himself.

9. *Consciousness versus Objectivity in Modern Science*

Tracing the early benefits which physical science derived from excluding the ever-present datum of consciousness, the datum of the subject, the datum of the observer, from its investigation of nature in the interest of objectivity, and pointing out the present compulsions, arising from twentieth-century science, to give that datum its due status, nuclear scientist Erwin Schrodinger says *(What is life? and Mind and Matter,* pp. 127-128):

> 'Without being aware of it, and without being rigorously systematic about it, we exclude the subject of cognizance from the domain of ... nature that we endeavour to understand. We step with our own person back into the part of an onlooker, who does not belong to the world which, by this very procedure, becomes an objective world. ...
>
> 'For the moment, let me just mention the two most blatant antinomies due to our unawareness of the fact that a moderately satisfying picture of the world has only been reached at the high price of taking ourselves out of the picture, stepping back into the role of non-concerned observer.
>
> 'The first of these antinomies is the astonishment at finding our world picture 'colourless, cold, mute.' Colour and sound, hot and cold are our immediate sensations; small wonder that they are lacking in a world model from which we have removed our own mental person.
>
> 'The second is our fruitless quest for the place where mind acts on matter or *vice-versa,* so well known from Sir Charles Sherrington's honest search, magnificently expounded in *Man on His Nature.* The material world has only been constructed at the price of taking the Self, that is, mind, out of it, removing it. ...
>
> 'While I continue to regard the removal of the subject of cognizance from the objective world picture as the high price paid for a fairly satisfactory picture for the time being, Jung goes further and blames us for paying this ransom from an inextricably difficult situation. He says *(Eranos Jahrbuch,* p. 398):
>
> '"All science *(Wissenchaft),* however, is a function of the soul, in which all knowledge is rooted. The soul is the greatest of all cosmic miracles, it is the *condition sine qua non* of the world as an object. It is exceedingly astonishing that the Western world (apart from very rare exceptions) seems to have so little appreciation of this being so. The flood of external objects of cognizance has made the subject of all cognizance withdraw to the background, often to apparent non-existence."'

Describing this as an impasse, Schrodinger says *(ibid.,* pp. 131-132):

'Mind has erected the objective outside world of the natural philosopher out of its own stuff. Mind could not cope with this gigantic task otherwise than by the simplifying device of excluding itself—withdrawing from its conceptual creation. Hence the latter does not contain its creator.

'I cannot convey the grandeur of Sherrington's immortal book by quoting sentences; one has to read it oneself. Still, I will mention a few of the more particularly characteristic (*Man on his Nature*, p. 222 and p. 232):

'"Physical science ... faces us with the impasse that mind *per se* cannot play the piano—mind *per se* cannot move a finger of a hand.

'"Then the impasse meets us. The blank of the 'how' of mind's leverage on matter. The inconsequence staggers us. Is it a misunderstanding?"...'

10. *Unity of Subject and Object*

Schrödinger continues (*ibid.*):

'The impasse *is* an impasse. Are we thus not the doers of our deeds? Yet we feel responsible for them, we are punished or praised for them, as the case may be. It is a horrible antinomy. I maintain that it cannot be solved on the level of present-day science which is still entirely engulfed in the 'exclusion principle'—without knowing it—hence the antinomy. To realize this is valuable, but it does not solve the problem. You cannot remove the 'exclusion principle' by act of parliament, as it were. Scientific attitude would have to be rebuilt, science must be made anew. Care is needed. ...'

And offering an *Advaitic* suggestion to resolve the impasse, he concludes (*ibid.*, pp. 134-37):

'As an appendix to these considerations, those strongly interested in the physical sciences might wish to hear me pronounce on a line of ideas, concerning subject and object, that has been given great prominence by the prevailing school of thought in quantum physics, the protagonists being Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg, Max Born, and others. Let me first give you a very brief description of their ideas. ...

'We are given to understand that we never observer an object without its being modified or tinged by our own activity in observing it. We are given to understand that, under the impact of our refined methods of observation and of thinking about the results of our experiments, that mysterious boundary between the subject and the object has broken down. ...

'*Subject and object are only one*. The barrier between them cannot be said to have broken as a result of recent experience in the physical sciences, *for, this barrier does* not exist.' (italics not by the author)

11. *The Ultimate Reality in Vedānta: Its All-comprehending Dimension*

What is that unity of subject and object? It is here that our Upaniṣads have blazed a trail ages ago. I can definitely tell you that many modern Western scientists say: we respect the Vedas, we respect the Upaniṣads. Harvard University astronomer the late Harlow Shapley told me so personally. The famous book *Tao of Physics* of Fritjof Capra—we had met at lunch at our Vedanta Society of Berkeley, U.S.A. in 1976—quotes several passages from the Upaniṣads; here is one from chapter 4 of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (p.87):

> "That which is the finest essence—this whole world has that as its soul. That is Reality. That is Atman. That Thou art."

He quotes this and other Upaniṣadic passages with great approval; and he says that the ultimate Reality taught in physical science is far limited compared to the most comprehensive ultimate Reality taught in Vedānta (*ibid.*, p. 211):

> 'The *Brahman* of the Hindus, like the *Dharmakāya* of the Buddhists and the *Tao* of the Taoists, can be seen, perhaps, as the ultimate unified field, from which spring not only the phenomena studied in physics, but all other phenomena as well.
>
> 'In the Eastern view, the reality underlying all phenomena is beyond all forms and defies all description and specification. It is therefore often said to be formless, empty, or void. But this emptiness is not be taken for nothingness. It is, on the contrary, the essence of all forms and the source of all life. Thus the Upaniṣads say (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* 4.10.4):
>
> '"*Brahman* is life. *Brahman* is joy, *Brahman* is the Void. ...Joy, verily, that is the same as the Void. The Void, verily, that is the same as joy."'

If, therefore, Vedānta is more comprehensive than physical science, India's concept of education, which is the same thing as 'Swami Vivekananda's concept of education', more comprehensive than modern education and is best defined in the Swamiji's own words (*Complete Works,* Vol.V., p. 366, Seventh Edition):

> 'What we want are Western Science coupled with Vedanta, with *brahmacarya* as the guiding motto, and also *śraddhā* and faith in one's own self.'

Education so defined has the strength of a unifying philosophy behind it, encompassing nature and man, and discovering behind both the presence of the Divine, the Infinite, and the Immortal. That truth is what is conveyed by the first verse of the first Upaniṣad, the *Īśā Upaniṣad:*

'All this manifested universe should be seen as filled with the Divine' -- *Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvam.*

In everything, even in the atom, in the beam of the sun, in all creatures—everywhere—you will find, if you plunge deep into the ocean of existence, say the Upaniṣads, the presence of that infinite Consciousness-field, the Ātman. That is your true nature -- *Tat tvam asi* --'That thou art'; you are not the tiny psycho-physical entity that your senses and sense-bound mind report about you; there is something infinite about you; try to realize it, and bring its pure and infinite energy resources to enrich and stabilise your outer life and inter-human relationships.

This is the basis and direction of the Upaniṣadic concept of education; and let me tell you that many scientists, when they come in touch with these profound ideas of the Upaniṣads, become simply charmed, simply inspired. I like to share with you another passage from Erwin Schrödinger, who strongly upholds the Vedantic truth of the unity and non-duality of Consciousness which Śaṅkarācārya had proclaimed as their greatest teaching (*Introduction to Brahma-Sutra Commentary*):

ātmaikatva-vidyā pratipattaye sarve vedāntā ārabhyante—'all Vedāntas (i.e. the Upaniṣads) endeavour to realize the truth of the Unity of the Ātman'. Says Schrödinger (*What is Life?* and *Mind and Matter*, pp.94-95):

> 'Consciousness is never experienced in the plural, only in the singular. ... Consciousness is a singular of which the plural is unknown; that there *is* only one thing and that, what seems to be a plurality is merely a series of different aspects of this one thing, produced by a deception (The Indian *Māyā*).'

In this connection, it will be instructive to hear also the following concluding words of his lecture on *Unity and Diveristy of Life* by another scientist, the great molecular biologist late Professor J. B. S. Haldane (quoted by R. B. Lal in *Gita in the Light of Modern Science,* p. 25):

'On the walls of the large room in the zoological laboratory at Munster, where professor Rensch keeps his living animals, are written the words: *Tat Tvam Asi* ("That (infinite and pure Ātman) thou art"). If I have helped any of you to understand some of the implications of this great saying, my lectures have not been in vain.'

12. *The Impact of the Advaitic Vision on Education*

When they come in touch with this profound Vedāntic science of man in depth, these creators and representatives of twentieth-century science simply stand in admiration and appreciation: what a wonderful vision of man! Man as the Immortal Self, ever pure, ever free! Vedānta proclaims that in the Ātman alone is freedom, and in freedom alone is human dignity, fearlessness, peace, love, and fulfilment.

This is the profound truth which helped ancient India to develop an education which did not make any distinction between physical science and the science of spirituality. According to accepted Indian tradition, the goddess presiding over every type of science or knowledge is one, namely, *Sarasvatī*. She presides over *aparā-vidyā* as much as *parā-vidyā;* she presides over the physical sciences, all the technical professions including medical and engineering, all arts and crafts, and also over all higher spiritual knowledge. This has been the age-old concept of the unity of all knowledge in India.

The present division between the secular and the sacred is a new superstition, not warranted by the Upaniṣads and the central Indian tradition; the acquisition of knowledge is a *continous* process. A baby is born absolutely innocent of conscious knowledge; then it looks around; it experiences the pouring in of diverse impressions into its sensory apparatus from the outer world; its reaction to this is, initially, a sense of puzzle and mystery, expressing itself in an incohate question; What is this outer world into which I have been ushered from out of the sheltered world of my mother's womb? Always you can see this sense of puzzle and mystery in the eyes of a newborn baby; and,gently it probes that outer world and tries to understand it and have a grip on it. In the words of Willim James, the famous American philosopher and phychologist: To a new born baby,the world is a buzzing booming confusion! Out of that confusion, the baby creates knowledge, by observation, classification of data, and acquisition of control over that external world—first incoherently and haltingly and, later, as an adult and as scientist, coherently, steadily, and efficiently. At a later stage of this search, as an adult who has become dissatisfied with the childish toys of material wealth and organic satisfactions, man becomes confronted by a greater mystery, namely, himself, and continues his scientific search for truth from the outer physical nature, from the *without* of nature, into the remarkable mystery of man himself—into the *within* dimension of nature as revealed in nature's highest evolutionary product, namely, man.

It is this second mystery, emerging at the frontiers of physical science, that is intriguing several modern scientists. Says Lincoln Barnett *(The Universe and Dr. Einstein,* Mentor Edition, pp. 126-27):

> 'In the evolution of scientific thought, one fact has become impressively clear; there is no mystery of the physical world which does not point to a mystery beyond itself. All highroads of intellect, all byways of theory and conjecture, lead ultimately to an abyss that human ingenuity can never span. For man is enchained by the very condition of his being, his finiteness and involvement in nature. The farther he extends his horizons, the more vividly he recognizes the fact that, as the physicist Niels Bohr puts it, "we are both spectators and actors in the great drama of existence."
>
> *Man is thus his own greatest mystery. He does not understand the vast veiled universe into which he has been cast for the reason that he does not understand himself.* He comprehends but little of his organic processes, and even of his unique capacity to perceive the world about him, to reason and to dream. *Least of all does he understand his noblest and most mysterious faculty: the ability to transcend himself and perceive himself in act of perception.'* (italics not by the author)

Swami Vivekananda has given expression to his ideas on education lucidly and comprehensively. Introducing the Swami's small book *Education,* Mahatma Gandhi writes:

> 'Surely, Vivekananda's words do not need introduction from anybody; they make their own irresistible appeal.
>
> Yours, Bapu.'

13. *Vivekananda's Discipleship under Sri Ramakrishna: Its Wider Significance for all Education*

How could Swamiji speak with such 'irresistible appeal' on education? The answer lies in his own experience of education and its comprehensive nature. He had studied the modern sciences, history, and literature, with keen interest, while he was at school and college; earlier, he had imbibed at his mother's feet the spiritual and cultural traditions of his own ancient country. But by these alone his education was not complete. This educated Narendra had to go and sit at the feet of an 'uneducated' man—the great Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) for five years, to complete his education and emerge as Swami Vivekananda! What a strange spectacle is this anecdote in the modern age! Highly educated and intellectual, not only he, but also several other similar youths, has to approach the 'uneducated' Sri Ramakrishna living in Dakshineswar, north Calcutta, to continue and complete their education. Who was this Sri Ramakrishna? He had never gone to school beyond the first or second year to the primary level. He was just ordinary; and yet he was also something extraordinary; for he had given himself an education in what I had earlier referred to as the *parā-vidyā* of the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad;* and they all found the fulfilment of their education in him.

Aparā-vidyā was represented by Narendra and other young disciples, while Sri Ramakrishna represented *parā-vidyā.* And the modern age re-experienced, what ancient India had always upheld, the extraordinary spectacle of *aparā-vidyā* going to *parā-vidyā* to fulfil itself. This confirmed three truths which the Indian tradition has always held fast to, during the several millennia of her history, in contrast to the opposite experience of the 2500 years of the Western tradition:

1. *Aparā-vidyā* must rise to the level of *parā-vidyā* to fulfil itself; knowledge must rise to wisdom;
2. There is an unbroken continuty in human education from *aparā-vidyā* to *parā-vidyā;*
3. *Parā-vidyā* and *aparā-vidyā* are complementary and never contradictory.

14. *Arnold Toynbee on the Significance of Sri Ramakrishna for the Modern Age*

Here we can trace the spiritual and cultural continuity from the ancient Upaniṣads to modern Sri Ramakrishna. There is an intimacy and complementarity between Narendra and Sri Ramakrishna; Sri Ramakrishna welcomes and Narendra responds. Many great writers today have referred to Sri Ramakrishna as the salvation for this age. How strange such a suggestion appears -- The man who was uneducated going to save the highly educated and intellectual modern age! What is the truth in such a statement? The truth is that Sri Ramakrishna *helps you to mature knowledge into wisdom;* gives you knowledge of your own true nature as the ever-pure, ever-free, and ever-luminous Atman. This truth, this knowledge, the hunger and search for it, is entirely missing in modern education.

Arnold Toynbee, author of the 10-volume *Study of History* and *A Historian's Approach to Religion,* presents Sri Ramakrishna to modern man in this very role (Foreword to *Sri Ramakrishna and His Unique Message* by Swami Ghanananda):

> 'Sri Ramakrishna's message was unique in being expressed in action. The message itself was the perennial message of Hinduism. As Swami Ghanananda points out, Hinduism is unique among the historic higher religions in holding that neither Hinduism nor any other religion is a unique representation of truth or a unique way of salvation.
>
> 'Ramakrishna made his appearance and delivered his message at the time and the place at which he and his message were needed. The message could hardly have been delivered by anyone who had not been brought up in the Hindu religious tradition. ... Today, we are still living in this transitional chapter of the world's history; *but it is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending, if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race.*
>
> 'In the present age, the world has been united on the material plane by Western technology. But this Western skill has not only 'annihilated distance'; it has armed the peoples of the world with weapons of devastating power at a time when they have been brought to point-blank range of each other, without yet having learnt to know and love each other. At this supremely dangerous moment in human history, *the only way of salvation for mankind is an Indian way.* The emperor Aśoka's and Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions: here we have the attitude and the spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family and, in the atomic age, this is the only alternative to destroying ourselves.' (italics not by the author)

15. *'Here, Ye Children of Immortal Bliss!'*

It is this vision, which Sri Ramakrishna embodied in himself and which Swami Vivekananda assimilated sitting at his feet and which he, later, presented at the Chicago World Parliament of Religions. In that presentation, Swamiji said (*Complete Works*, Vol. I, pp. 10-11):

> 'Is man a tiny boat in a tempest, raised one moment on the foamy crest of a billow and dashed down into a yawning chasm the next, rolling to and fro at the mercy of good and bad actions—a powerless, helpless wreck in an ever-raging, ever-rushing, uncompromising current of cause and effect; a little moth placed under the wheel of causation which rolls on crushing everything in its way and waits not for the widow's tears or the orphan's wails?
>
> 'The heart sinks at the idea, yet this is the law of Nature. Is there no hope? Is there no escape?—was the cry that went up from the bottom of the heart of despair. It reached the throne of mercy, and words of hope and consolation came down and inspired a Vedic sage, and he stood up before the world and in trumpet voice proclaimed the glad tidings: (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad,* 2.6 and 3.8):
>
> '"Here, ye children of immortal bliss! even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion: knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death over again."
>
> '"Children of immortal bliss"—what a sweet, what a hopeful name! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name—heirs of immortal bliss—yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the Children of God, the shares of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth—sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter.'

Romain Rolland remarks thus about the lectures of Vivekananda at the Parliament (*Life of Vivekananda,* p.42):

> 'Each time he repeated with new arguments, but with the same force of conviction, his thesis of a universal religion without limit of time or space, uniting the whole *credo* of the human spirit, from the enslaved fetishism of the savage to the most liberal creative affirmations of modern science. He harmonised them into a magnificent synthesis which, far from extinguishing the hope of a single one, helped all hopes to grow and flourish according to their own proper nature. There was to be no other dogma but the divinity inherent in man and his capacity for indefinite evolution.'

16. *Education as All-round Human Growth*

Herein is the very soul of human education; and its greatest emphasis is on all-round growth, physical, mental, and spiritual. After all the education you have undergone, you ask yourself the question: 'Have I grown spiritually?' You may have grown intellectually, you may have grown physically. But have you grown spiritually? Your education is satisfactory only when you answer: I have put myself, and taken the first few steps, on the long road of my spiritual growth.' Then alone is your education worthwhile. It will make for human fulfilment, individual and collective; otherwise, we shall move from one tension to another, from one distortion to another; and human problems will only multiply all the time.

This higher dimension of education finds endorsement, in twentieth-century biology, in its emphasis on *fulfilment* as the goal of evolution at the human level and the *replacement of quantity,* the criterion of evolution at the pre-human levels, to *quality* at the human stage. In the nineteenth-century biology, on the other hand, the goal of evolution was defined as: organic satisfaction, physical survival, and numerical increase; but these are now relegated as secondary at the human stage, and *fulfilment* and *qualitative richness* are treated as primary.

Education today must help the student to ask the question and find the answer to: what is the quality of your life, since quantity has become secondary and subordinate to quality, at the human level? As emphasized by Sir Julian Huxley in the course of his keynote lecture on 'The Evolutionary Vision' given at the Chicago university Congress of scientists celebrating Darwin Centenary (*Evolution after Darwin,* Vol. III, p. 257):

> 'I spoke of quality. This must be the dominant concept of our new belief-system—quality and richness as aganist quantity and uniformity.'

And discussing the subject of material utility in the light of this belief-system, Huxley says *(ibid.*, p.259):

> 'Once we truly believe. ... that man's destiny is to make possible greater fulfilment for human beings and fuller achievement by human societies, utility in the customary sense becomes subordinate. Quantity of material production is, of course, necessary as the basis for the satisfaction of elementary human needs—but only up to a certain degree. *More than a certain number of calories or cocktails or TV sets or washing machines per person is not merely unnecessary, but bad. Quanitity of material production is a means to a further end, not an end in itself.*

And, highlighting *quality* as the dynamics of evolution, Huxley concludes (*ibid.*, pp. 260-61):

> 'Thus the evolutionary vision. ... illumines our existence in a simple, but almost overwhelming way. ... It shows us our destiny and our duty. It shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality.' (italics not by the author)

The West is showing today the evil effects of the dominance of quantity over quality; and the same is spreading to India and other countries, due to the high prestige of the modern West. When I mention these distortions of modern civilization during my lectures and discussions in the universities in the West, I am sometimes asked by some defenders of the current Western civilization in the audience: What about the poor people sleeping on the pavements of the Calcutta streets? I gently reply: they atleast sleep well on the pavements, whereas many people in our highly developed societies, though living in palatial residences, do not often enjoy natural sleep! Of course, we do not want people to be poor, hungry, and homeless. We need scientific and technical developments to make all our people to live decent human lives. And that calls for the spread of secular education and economic development. But this quantity improvement must lead to quality improvement. It is this vital need that lies behind Swami Vivekananda's constant stress on the need *to combine, in education all over the world, the physical sciences with the science of spirituality*.

17. *Conclusion: Education to Be a Synthesis of Learning to Do and Learning to Be*

One word more. Some years ago, the Unesco appointed a commission of enquiry on education in the post-war world. The French Education Minister of the time, who became also Prime Minister later, M. Edgar Faure, was the Chairman of that Commission. It issued a report bearing a significant title: *Learning to be.* Till now, the only stress in education is *learning to do.* How can I become a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, or any other sort of social functionary? This is learning *to do.* Yes, we shall continue to stress this learning *to do* ideas and technique; but the report emphasizes that the main stress in education should be learning *to be. Learning to do* is included in *learning to be.* And when you deal with 'learning to be', you come to this subject of man in depth—the great science of *adhyātma-vidyā.*

Thus we get an education in which the physical and social sciences and the science of man in depth go hand in hand, under the philosophy of a comprehensive spirituality which is the theme of the *yoga* of the *Gītā*. *From the Indian point of view, I repeat, and let all our people realize it today, there is never any conflict between the two dimensions of science, namely, aparā and parā.* This is the Indian approach to the subject of human education with a view to ensuring total human fulfilment, individual and collective. *This is the rational strength and conviction, and contemporary relevance, behind Swami Vivekananda's ideas and ideals of education and religion.* These are bound to receive increasing welcome and implementation in due course by thinking minds in India and the rest of the world.

33

EDUCATION IN THE MODERN AGE: NEW DIMENSIONS *

1. *Introductory: A Word of Welcome*

I am very happy to meet you all this afternoon—boys and girls of the high school of neighbouring Arnhem along with your teacher—in this hotel of this beautiful Oosterbeek village—where a group of men and women, young and old, from Holland, England, America, and Germany, have come together, under the auspices of the Stichting Yoga-Vedānta Nederland, to spend a Vedānta week in connection with its annual Vedānta spiritual retreat programme, which has been going on since 1971. You may be interested to know what all these people and myself are doing here. We are engaged in studying a great philosophy of human development and fulfilment, a profound science of human possibilities, known as Vedānta, which India had developed over 4000 years ago and continues to cherish all these thousands of years.

You have desired me to address you. You will be interested to know that I have addressed student groups like this in many countries and in many colleges, schools, and universities, in India, Holland, America, England, and in many other parts of the world, including several communist countries. I particularly remember, on this occasion, my talk given to the students of the Westminster High School, London, about six years ago and of the one at Port Augusta, a South Australian small town high school, five years earlier. I have found students in all parts of the world very much interested in the theme I was expounding and what is that theme? The theme is yourself, boys and girls everywhere, engaged in getting educated in schools, colleges, and universities, with a view to achieving life fulachieving life fulfilment. I shall, therefore, speak to you today on *Education in the Modern Age: New Dimensions*. It is a subject that all of you now sitting before me, as well as other students elsewhere, will be deeply interested in. What is the kind of education that you need? You may not know much about this subject at this stage of your life; but I wish to stimulate your thinking in that direction. You study books, hear class lectures, take part in sports, sit for and pass examinations. All these are certainly part and parcel of education; but the most important part of education is the shaping of your mind and character, the training of your mind to fit it to shape yourself and your environment so as to fulfil your life's purposes. That is the most important work we ought to have today in all our education.

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* Based on the tape record of an address to boys and girls, between 14 and 18 years age-group, of the High School in Arnhem, Holland, on the afternoon of 7th May 1982, in the course of the week-long Vedānta Retreat at DePietersburg, Oosterbeek, near Arnhem, followed by questions and answers ...

2. *The Missing Element in Our Otherwise Great Modern Civilization*

We are living in a very great civilization which is the product of modern Western science and technology. It is a wonderful world that modern science has created for us; we are living in the amazing space-age of this civilization. What a tremendous change from what it was 100 years ago to what it is today! We have vast knowledge of the macrocosmic and microcosmic universe and have command over all sorts of useful gadgets; we have plenty of comfort; and we have quick means of travel and communication of ideas. We have gone to the moon; our sputniks have gone to other planets and one is just now racing towards the outskirts of the solar system and into the outer space.

All these, and many other similar achievements in other fields of science, are great human achievements; *but something vital is missing in our otherwise great civilization; and that missing item must be identified and must occupy the searching minds of young students like you.* That missing item is revealed in its bitter fruits, in the world-wide phenomenon of tension, anxiety, and unhappiness within man and the psychic and social distortions resulting from them.

Now, anxiety is a form of fear. In the pre-scientific ages, for example, in this very Europe, the people were primitive; they had no knowledge of nature or her processes; and they lived hard lives, in constant fear of nature and her forces—thunder, lightning, the wolf and other wild animals, and various kinds of diseases. But, today, we have science with us; we have become civilized by controlling nature's forces. So those fears arising from external nature do not assail us. But we cannot claim that that science has banished, and left us entirely without, all fear, since civilized man is afflicted with other forms of fear referred to above. The truth is that physical sciences have destroyed some fears; but, in its wake, other fears are assailing man today. And *these other fears arise from man's inner nature where the arm of our physical sciences does not reach.* And these fears create psychic distortions in us, which manifest themselves as anxiety, tension, frustration, boredom, as well as violence, crime, and even inclination to suicide. These are all the evil fruits of psychic distortions within man, even though our physical sciences have brought order and richness in our outer life.

3. *Best Science: Preventive and not merely Curative*

How can we prevent these psychic distortions? It is not enough that we discover and apply *cures* for them; that we are doing, though not with satisfactory results, and often giving rise to undesirable side effects and other maladies. The most vital question is: how to *prevent* them. Why should man, in this highly amazing space-age, with his vast control of nature's forces, experience this tragedy of inner dissatisfactions and distortions? And is there a science which can save man from these inner maladies and their outer expressions of social distortions? That science is best which *prevents* ailments and *not merely cures* them.

I am sure you will all agree that this question is a challenging one, and the handling of it by modern man will be a rewarding experience. If the mind is fine, everything is fine; if the mind is distorted, everything is distorted. It is like your looking into a mirror. You distort your face, and you will find the mirror distorting your face. If you have a beautiful face, you find the mirror reflecting that beauty. So I am sure you will appreciate that this is an important part of all human education, namely, how to train the mind in knowledge, strength, steadiness, and fearlessness, so that it can *withstand* the powerful currents of all difficult and distorting experiences in life. Human life provides plenty of occasions to face the pressures of difficult experiences. Such occasions will be certainly less in your young life; but, as you grow into your physical and psychic maturity and enter the mainstream of life, you are bound to come across such intractable experiences, which sometimes create psychic breakdowns and social distortions. Modern sciences like psychiatry and psycho-therapy deal with such minds and offer some help. Suppose a child does not get parental love and care in its early life; its mind gets badly distorted from childhood. What is the training of the mind, what is the energy, that a human child must acquire, through its family environment at first and by itself later, by which it can stay steady and prevent psychic distortions arising from such privations? What is the nature of that inner energy resource and how can we acquire it slowly and steadily from childhood onwards? I am sure, you will all agree, that this preventive knowledge should form an essential part of education.

It is obvious that that energy, that strength, does not come from external physical nature; nor does it come from our muscle or from our brain, because men and women with plenty of muscle and with plenty of brain also suffer from these distortions. Naturally, we have to search for it in the deeper levels of man, in the spiritual dimensions of the human personality.

4. *Vedānta and the Scientific Temper*

It is this science that we discuss, from various points of view and with plenty of questions, in these annual retreats. It is the science and philosophy of Vedānta, developed in India ages ago, and continued to be cultivated down to our own times—a universal, comprehensive, rational, and practical philosophy of life possessing high intellectual and spiritual prestige. It is no wonder, therefore. that it has attracted the attention and interest, in this scientific age. of several of our modern scientists, some of whom quote passages from the literature of Vedānta in their own books.

The word Vedānta is composed of two words, *veda* and *anta*. *Veda* means science, or knowledge; and *anta* means the end or the essence. Thus 'Vedānta' means, in one sense, the Upaniṣads, which form the end as well as the essential portion of the vast and varied Vedic literature and, in another sense, the essence or consummation of all knowledge, namely, wisdom. Wisdom is matured knowledge. Knowledge, so understood, covers, according to one of the oldest books of the literature of Vedānta, namely, the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.5), not only all positivistic knowledge, such as physical sciences, economics, politics, sociology, but even all the world's ethnical religions and their holy scriptures. And wisdom indicates the maturing of all this knowledge through the experience, by man, of a deeper dimension of reality than what his sense organs reveal.

This philosophy of Vedānta allows you, expects you, welcomes you, to ask questions about the truths it places before you; that is what makes it a science, *a science of man in depth*. The more you question and inquire, the more you get from it. Usually, religions are based on dogmas which you are forbidden to question; you have just to accept. When you question, the dogma breaks down, or they who propagate it break the head of the questioner himself or herself! Hence the ban on questioning and inquiry in all types of *ethnical* religions. From this arises their opposition to science whose very lifeblood is questioning and rational enquiry. *If you want to understand the uniqueness of Vedānta, you should grasp the fundamental difference between science and ethnical religions;* one is *born into* one of these ethnical religions; one has no choice about it; but with respect to science, one *seeks* it: no one of you is born into physics or chemistry or other sciences; but you choose it or seek it. Vedānta holds that religion has a *scientific* dimension, over and above its more obvious *ethnical* expression; that comes to you when you seek it in a critical spirit of truth-seeking. Says the British mathematician and astronomer late Arthur Eddingtion (*Science and the Unseen World*, p.5):

> 'You can neither understand the spirit of true science nor of true religion, unless you keep seeking in the forefront.'

This philosophy of Vedānta breathes that scientific temper and spirit. It is the product of a sustained rational questioning and investigation of experience, of inquiry into the true nature of man and his destiny, conducted by brilliant minds of ancient India thousands of years ago, among whom were men, women, children, kings, emperors, and common people; the literature known as the Upaniṣads convey to us the scientific temper and outlook of these pioneering minds, the methods they adopted, and the truths which they discovered and verified and which they place before us for our own discovery and verification.

And the profoundest truth about you and me that they discovered is that we are all potentially divine, that there is an infinite and immortal dimension behind the finite and mortal body and mind which we think we are, according to our sensory experience. Suppose I ask any one of you the question: Who are you? You will answer: I am Mr. so and so or Miss so and so; I am so many centimetres tall, so many kilograms in weight; and give other similar parameters about you. Can we say that these describe everything about you? They leave out many physical and mental possibilities which will emerge as you grow and mature; they also leave out a very profound dimension, the depth dimension, of your personality. Behind the body, behind the nervous system, behind the mind, Vedānta discovered the divine spark in every being—ever pure, ever free, and ever luminous; and they called it the Atman, the infinite Self. But this dimension cannot be revealed by man's sensory apparatus. The senses reveal only the physical dimensions of man. The American Nobel Prize winner, medical scientist, late Alexis Carrel wrote a book, about 80 years ago, with the title, *Man, the Unknown*. These physical dimensions constitute *man, the known*, behind which is *man, the unknown*. The sages of the Upaniṣads discovered this truth about *man, the unknown* through a penetrating investigation and they proclaimed it as the truth about every human being. This Ātman, they declared, is of the nature of Pure Consciousness, infinite and non-dual. The same infinite Ātman, is in you, in me, in all. At the back of our finite limited consciousness, there is this infinite unlimited consciousness in which we are all one. And that is the centre, says Vedanta, of infinite energy resources and constitute the true meaning of what religions call God.

5. *Education To Stress on Prevention of Psychic Distortions*

In modern civilization, this infinite dimension of man remains neglected, unknown, and unrecognized, and, therefore, unutilised. Civilized man lives only at his physical and psychic levels. What lies beyond these levels is a *terra incognita* to modern civilization, to modern thought, and to modern man. That is why, says Vedānta.

that, in spite of such beautiful and powerful technological achievements, modern man is still suffering from fear, tension, and other psychic distortions and ailments. That is also the reason for the ever increasing crime and violence in our civilization. The current spiritual malnutrition is at the back of these increasing psychic distortions, to meet which society is turning out increasing numbers of psychotherapists and psychiatrists and police.

Modern technical civilization helps you all to *prevent* physical malnutrition by providing you with enough of nutritious food and exercise; it helps you all to *prevent* intellectual malnutrition by providing you with schools, libraries, and many other avenues of intellectual knowledge. In these two fields, the healthy principle adopted is *prevention* and not *cure*. But there is no provision to *prevent* the malnutrition of man's inner life. In this vital field, alas!, there is so little emphasis on *prevention,* and all emphasis is on *cure* only. That is the biggest challenge before human knowledge and human wisdom today. Why should men and women and children remain internally ill-nourished and weak while they are well-nourished and strong externally? Do you not see highly intellectual people becoming to commit even suicide? All this shows only that modern man is lacking in spiritual strength. He or she has physical strength, even intellectual strength; but spiritual strength is lacking. Is it not the role of education primarily to stress and concentrate on prevention of psychic distortions? Is it not the role of modern education to make modern man achieve all-round strength and fearlessness?

In modern life, man is subjected to various pressures, but he or she is not given the spiritual strength to withstand these pressures. Why should science created by man, and the energies released by man through his physical sciences, destroy their creator himself? Because he has no grip on these energies and cannot discipline them and guide them to suit his or her own growth, development, and fulfilment. To do so, he must have great spiritual strength within, but this is lacking. It is like a youth riding a powerful horse without learning how to discipline the horse and guide it in the direction desired by him or her in a masterly way; and so the horse takes its rider wherever *it* likes; and the horse enjoys the ride and the youth becomes, like a frightened child, *a victim of that ride!* If only she or he knew how to grip the horse and discipline and guide it in the proper direction, what a beautiful experience that riding would be to that youth!

Similarly, if modern man learns to discipline the energies of his body and mind, and the other energies released by science and technology outside of him, he or she will command a grip on the outer situation, making it serve his or her own purposes of life development and fulfilment. This is achieved only by men and women developing, from childhood onwards, the spiritual dimension of their personality. *Today's children must start developing that rich dimension of their personality and achieve a parallel spiritual growth along with their physical and intellectual growth.* Otherwise, the world will shape them and not they the world. That will be the greatest tragedy of man—a tragedy which is being enacted every day in our contemporary civilization.

British psychologist R.D. Laing refers to this tragedy in his book: *The Politics of Experience*, p.104, in these words (quoted by Fritjof Capra: *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*, p. 379):

> "A child born today in the United Kingdom stands a ten times greater chance of being admitted to a mental hospital than to a university. ... This can be taken as an indication that we are driving our children mad more effectively than we are genuinely educating them. Perhaps it is our way of educating them that is driving them mad."

6. *Education: 'Learning to Be' versus 'Learning to Do'*

Our education must provide against this tragedy afflicting man. There are plenty of books and journals and papers regularly coming out, describing this contemporary tragic human situation. You read in papers and journals about crime explosion, sex explosion, drug explosion, and other types of social distortions. These are the challenges before you to ponder over seriously when you are getting your education; it is good for you to understand these problems and seek, not only short-term remedies through psychotherapy and other techniques, but, more important still from the point of view of education, scientifically authentic permanent preventives. Merely talking and writing about the evils of our society do not help us much; anyone can do it; that may be the role of other disciplines like politics, but not of education; lighting a candle is more important than shouting about darkness. The real thing is to seek for a science of living which will prevent these maladies from afflicting humanity; that is the role, that ought to be the role, of all education.

It is in this context that you begin to understand the Vedantic emphasis on the truth of the inner world of man, the truth of the *within* of nature as revealed in nature's finest evolutionary product, namely, man, and the need for an inquiry into it to become an essential and integral part of any healthy educational policy and programme. *This is the new dimension of education, long neglected, but now compelling recognition, due to the contemporary human and social distortions*. This compelling need is reflected, even if only as a glimpse, even in the title of a new book first published by the Unesco in 1972: *Learning To Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow*. It is the report of a Unesco Commission enquiring into the problems of education in the post-second-World-War world, presided over by M.Edgar Faure, minister of Education, later Prime Minister, of France.

Says the Commission in the very opening pages of its report (pp. V—VI):

> 'Four basic assumptions underlay our work from the start. The first, which was indeed the justification for the task we undertook, is that of the existence of an international community which, amidst the variety of nations and cultures, of political options and degrees of development, is reflected in common aspirations, problems, and trends, and in its movement towards one and the same destiny. …
>
> 'The second is belief in democracy, conceived of as implying each man's right to realize his own potential and to share in the building of his own future. …
>
> 'The third assumption is that the aim of development is the complete fulfilment of man, in all the richness of his personality, the complexity of his forms of expression, and his various commitments—as an individual, member of a family and of a community, citizen and producer, inventor of techniques, and creative dreamer.
>
> 'Our last assumption is that only an over-all, life-long,education can produce the kind of complete man, the need for whom is increasing with the continually more stringent constraints tearing the individual asunder. We should no longer assiduously acquire knowledge once and for all, but learn how to build up a continually evolving body of knowledge all through life—"learning to be"

And, in the chapter headed 'Towards the complete man', the report says (pp. 153-57):

> 'A new man for a new world! ...
>
> 'His knowledge of his own powers spreads to knowledge of his own consciousness. Never until now has he stretched to such limits his attempts to elucidate the mystery of his inner world. ...
>
> 'For training purposes, one of man's dimensions—that of intellectual cognition—has been arbitrarily chopped into pieces, while others have been forgotten or overlooked, and have been either reduced to an embryonic state or left to develop in anarchic fashion. For the supposed needs of scientific research or high-level specialization, the full general formation of many young people has been mutilated. ...
>
> 'The physical, intellectual, emotional, and ethical integration of the individual into a complete man is a broad definition of the fundamental aim for education. ...
>
> 'The truer he is to himself, the more closely he follows the laws of his nature and his own calling, the nearer he comes to humanity's common calling and, in addition, the better able he is to communicate with other people.'

Much of this thought and language is Vedānta, without the authors of the report knowing it, and without the philosophic strength of a conscious insight into the spiritual dimensions of the human personality. Let us listen to pre-second-World-War writing of Bertrand Russell, who also speaks Vedānta without obviously knowing it! (*The Scientific Outlook,* pp. 278-79):

> 'Man has been disciplined hitherto by his subjection to nature. Having emancipated himself from this subjection, he is showing something of the defects of slave-turned-master. A new moral outlook is called for in which submission to the powers of nature is replaced by respect for what is best in man. It is where this respect is lacking that scientific technique is dangerous. So long as it is present, science, having delivered man from bondage to nature, can proceed to deliver him from bondage to the slavish part of himself.'

This *'respect for what is best in man'* and the science which will *'proceed to deliver man from bondage to the slavish part of himself'*, is what Vedānta developed ages ago in her *adhyātma-vidyā,* in her science of the inner world of man, in her *science of human possibilities*. The intellect on which the light of the Atman shines becomes enlightened reason which is far different from the intellect which is enslaved by the sense organs and the outer sensory world:

Education thus must comprise *learning to be* as much as *learning* *to do*. It is when you stress this aspect of *learning to be* that you are led to the recognition of, and inquiry into, the inner world of man and its discipline and development. This is the one source of character-energy in man; and all healthy character is centred in a humanly oriented will.

Man lives in two worlds: an outer world and an inner world, a 'without' of nature and a 'within' of nature, in the language of Teilhard de Chardin, in his book: *The Phenomenon of Man*. *Learning to do* has reference to our dealings with the outer world. Modern man thinks of the inner world only when he or she is in some psychic trouble and then hands himself or herself over to psychiatrist or a psychotherapist, who studies, and handles, that disturbed inner world with its tensions, complexes, anxieties and self-insufficiencies. In many cases, he does set these right, at least in the short term. But rarely does it restore one to his or her original health, well-being, and efficiency.

From this current curative approach, we have to turn over to the preventive approach which is the true function of education. You can ask this question, each one of you to yourself: Which is better—curative or preventive? I am sure all of you will answer that preventing being ill is better than falling ill and getting cured. This preventive aspect of total human health and well being, with which is associated the concept of *learning to be,* is a profound science, which views man in his or her wholeness—physical, mental, and spiritual. This is a science like any other science—*the science of spirituality;* and we have to get an insight into it in our education, so that the inner man gets nourished, our reason catches a few rays of the light of the Ātman behind it and becomes enlightened, and we become strong to be able to withstand outer forces and pressures and radiate love and peace. Today, as I said, some physicists, biologists, sociologists, and psychologists are trying to understand this science and, in their efforts to do so, they come across the age-old science of spirituality of India known as Vedānta and Yoga.

7. *Education in the light of a Science of Human Possibilities*

The late Sir Julian Huxley of England, famous biologist and humanist, had referred to the urgent need for modern physical science to develop a new science capable of guiding humanity to the goal of fulfilment; and he called it *a science of human possibilities*. This is what India developed in her Vedānta ages ago, and has continued to nourish it ever since. Says he (*Evolution after Darwin*, Vol.I.p.20):

> 'In the light of our present knowledge, man's most comprehensive aim is seen not as mere survival, not as numerical increase, not as increased complexity of organization, or increased control over his environment, but as greater fulfilment—the fuller realization of more possibilities by human species collectively and more of its component members individually.'

And pleading for a scientific study of the scope of this concept of *fulfilment*, Huxley concludes (*ibid.*, p. 21):

> 'Once greater fulfilment is recognized as man's ultimate or dominant aim, we shall need a science of human possibilities to help guide the long course of psychosocial evolution that lies ahead.'

It is good for each of you to ask this question: What are the possibilities hidden *in me?* When you look at the eyes of a living baby, you find it different from the eyes of a doll baby. There is a depth in a living baby's eyes which you miss in the doll baby's eyes. What are the hidden possibilities disclosed by those living eyes? What depths of experience do they reveal? Is this not a wonderful subject of scientific investigation? Our modern physical sciences tell you about the possibilities hidden behind physical nature. They disclose to you the enormous energies hidden in the sub-atomic dimension of a piece of matter; and they also furnish you with the technology to bring out these nuclear energies and use them either to enhance human life or to destroy all life. This is certainly a great achievement, though it is not a happy prospect that modern man may use these nuclear energies for destroying himself and all life.

A hundred years ago, this knowledge, this technique, and this possibility of enormous energies to enhance life or to destroy all life, were not available to man. You must be studying a bit of physics in your school course. What was the source of energy for our ancestors over 800 years ago, why, even 100 years ago? Only combustion energy. They burnt wood or coal, and later, oil, and they got energy. It was limited in scope. When you eat food, it is that same combustion energy that breaks down and digests that food and gives you physical and mental strength. Then, in the last century, modern science discovered a deeper and more immense source of energy in matter, namely, electrical energy; and that revolutionized our civilization. Then came this amazing twentieth century: Physics discovered a more immense source of energy in matter in the wake of the splitting of the nucleus of the atom by the famous British scientist Rutherford. Then came quick developments in the investigation into this nuclear field giving man command of vast nuclear energies, for destructive purposes through the atom bomb, hydrogen bomb, and now the neutron bomb, and for peaceful and constructive purposes in the field of health and agriculture. You must have heard of Einstein's famous formula for the immense dimensions of this nuclear energy; $e = mc^2$, which means that the quantity of energy in a piece of matter is mass times the square of the speed of light!

8. *Wisdom versus Folly*

Today we have nuclear bombs and missiles in the hands of four or five nuclear powers in the world, enough to kill all humanity ten times over. This is not a happy situation because, in spite of having enormous power in the hands of man, there is no certainty that man will use that power only to enhance life, not to destroy it. We need a transformation within man himself to be able to make him inclined and capable to use his enormous powers for peaceful constructive purposes.

Bertrand Russell, in one of his post-Second-World-War writings, pointed out the danger of knowledge remaining at the level of knowledge alone, along with power that knowledge brings, and stressed the need for knowledge to rise to the level of wisdom (*The Impact of Science on Society*, p. 121):

> 'Broadly speaking, we are in the middle of a race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends. Given sufficient folly as to ends, increase in the skill required to achieve them is to the bad. The human race has survived hitherto owing to ignorance and incompetence; but, given knowledge and competence, combined with folly, there can be no certainly of survival. Knowledge is power, but it is power for evil just as much as for good. It follows that, unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be ncrease of sorrow!'

It is this energy of wisdom within man to control and guide and use all physical energy resources for constructive and peaceful human purposes that we have to discover and acquire today. Whether the physical energy resources, as well as political and money and other forms of power, in the hands of man, is small or immense in quantity, the main question is, and has always been, whether he will use it constructively or destructively. That depends entirely upon the nature and state of development of the inner world of man, the level at which her or his consciousness functions. If one of you have a strong muscular body, you can use that muscular energy either to help people or to harm people. Which way you will use that muscular energy does not depend upon that energy itself but upon another energy within your mind. Therefore, along with the possession of all external energy resources, such as muscular, intellectual, financial, political, and military, we need also the energy that can control and direct all such energies to constructive and peaceful purposes. *It is in this field that physical sciences become helpless to help you and you seek help from the science of spirituality.* That is the role of Vedānta as the science and technique of total human development and fulfilment, individual and collective. This is the science of the depth dimension of man, which reveals the enormous spiritual energy resources lying in store behind those eyes of any living child, and which provides the technique for the manifestation of these energies in life and character. The supreme form of the manifestation of this spiritual energy resource is *love,* with its varied expressions in compassion, dedication, and service. This capacity for love is largely missing today because modern humanity knows so little about the spiritual dimensions of his or her personality. That is why there is anxiety and fear everywhere.

9. *Tat Tvam Asi*

I am going to the United States on the 18th of this month, on my annual visit *en route* to Australia, and I am scheduled to speak on this subject of *The Science of Man in Depth* in some of the cities there. Apart from external threats of nuclear war, there is a constant threat from within man himself: Suppose you are in a state of depression. Is there any energy which you can command from within yourself that can lift you up? Suppose one is about to commit suicide; is there any energy that can make him or her stop doing it? The positive answers to these questions come from a wonderful subject, Vedānta—the science of the enormous spiritual energy resources hidden in every human being and the techniques of manifesting them in life and inter-human relationships. And that is the philosophy we are studying here with different groups year after year: Vedānta gives you an equation for the immense spiritual energy resources within man, just like the above-mentioned Einstein's equation for physical nuclear energy. It proclaims the profound truth that in each one of you—you are boys and girls between about 15 and 18 years—there is not only your growing muscular energy, there is not only your developing intellectual energy, there is also the infinite energy of what the great world religions call 'God', hidden in you all.

You will agree that that is a wonderful truth worth pursuing by you all. If religion means going to some heaven after death, there is no harm in waiting till old age to pursue religion; but if it means this science of spirituality, the technique of gaining strength, fearlessness, and love in this very life, I am sure, you will all agree, that it is worth pursuing from early life itself. Vedānta gives you a similar equation for the enormous spiritual, divine, energy resources present in each one of you. It forms the heart of a famous statement from a teacher and father by name Aruṇi to his student and son by name Śvetaketu, occurring in *The Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.8.7):

Sa eṣo aṇimā, aitat ātmyamidaṁ sarvam,
Tat satyam, sa ātmā,
Tat tvam asi, Śvetaketo—

'Everything in the universe has this subtle (Reality) for its Self: That is the Truth, That is the Atman, and That thou art, O Śvetaketu.'

'That thou art'—a simple three-word equation! I want you to keep that new equation in your mind and ponder over it. The sages of India studied man in depth, exactly like the modern scientists studied matter in depth. Those sages discovered the infinite man behind the finite man, the immortal man behind the mortal man. They discovered the extremely subtle but powerful spiritual energies hidden behind all forms of the gross and subtle energies in the human psycho-physical system. The word *Tat* or 'That' stands for that infinite Divine dimension with its infinite energy resources behind nature and man. The word *tvam* or 'thou', stands for you and me and all others—the finite individual with his or her limited physical and intellectual energy resources. To a little child, who sees a rock projecting out of the depth of the ocean bed, it is just a small stone, but its elders will tell it that it is an immense rock whose tip alone above water level is visible to our senses; the rest of the rock is beyond human sight. To your sensory vision, similarly, you look a limited finite being and others also appear to you the same; but this truth of *Tat tvam asi* lies at the deepest level of your personality, beyond the reach of your senses and sense-bound mind. Whenever your limited mind says that I am a finite human being with limited energies, I am a person of 50 or 70 kgs weight, I am weak, I am afraid, I am helpless, this science of man in depth tells you that this is not your true dimension; you are That: *Tat tvam asi.* It tells you not to evaluate yourself in terms of your sensory knowledge, just as modern physics tells you not to evaluate a piece of matter in terms of your sensory evaluation of it.

Vedānta is happy that, in this modern age, thanks to modern scientific achievements and the bringing of the peoples of the world close to each other, it can convey this profound hope-inspiring truth about man to millions like you everywhere, while, all these millennia of history, it could brighten the lives of only a fraction of humanity—saints and sages—even in India. This is the great work that Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) did in this modern age. The late professor William James, the noted psychologist and philosopher of Harvard University, refers to Swami Vivekananda, whom he had personally known and some of whose lectures in U.S.A. he had attended, in these words (*Pragmatism*, p. 102, Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1975 Edition):

> 'The paragon of all monistic systems is the Vedānta philosophy of Hindustan, and the paragon of Vedānta missionaries was the late Swami Vivekananda who visited our land some years ago.'

Vedānta therefore presents to all of you this profound truth of *Tat tvam asi* to make you strong, to make you fearless, to make you fulfilled, so that you can enjoy life through having a grip on it, like enjoying a horse ride with the horse under your control, and not remain a victim of life to be enjoyed by life and its forces.

This is the *truth* about man; not an *opinion;* not an utopian thought to console man. Vedānta provides the technique to unfold these immense energy resources hidden in man; and that technique covers the whole range of man's life and work, and not just a few religious practices. It is the philosophy of a comprehensive spirituality dealing with man at labour and man at leisure, man inter-acting with other human beings and man in his aloneness, man at work and man at worship. Srī Kṛṣṇa, therefore, exhorts one and all in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (8.7):

Mām anusmara yudhya ca—'meditate on Me (as your own inner Self) and carry on the battle of life.'

The whole of modern civilization needs this philosophy of a comprehensive spirituality to unify and stabilize man's outer and inner lives.

The steady unfolding of this inner spiritual energy resources manifests itself, as I have already said, as strength, fearlessness, love, compassion, and work-efficiency. What a beautiful idea it is—the energy of love, the energy of compassion, coming from the spiritual dimension of the human personality! Modern man is ignorant of it so far; modern psychology also knows very little about this, but it is progressing steadily in that direction. Let us listen again to what our agnostic thinker the late Bertrand Russell says with a bit of apology (*The Impact of Science on Society,* pp.104-5 1976 Edition):

> 'There are certain things that our age needs, and certain things that it should avoid. It needs compassion and a wish that mankind should be happy. ... The things that it must avoid, and that has brought it to the brink of catastrophe, are cruelty, envy, greed, competitiveness, search for irrational subjective certainty, and what Freudians call the death wish.
>
> 'The root of the matter is a very simple and old-fashioned thing, a thing so simple that I am almost ashamed to mention it, for fear of the derisive smile with which wise cynics will greet my words. The thing I mean—please forgive me for mentioning it—is love, Christian love, or compassion. If you feel this, you have a motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty.'

10. *Character: Built on Rock versus Built on Sand*

Suppose any one of you understands and appreciates this Vedāntic teaching which tells you that there is a profound spiritual energy centre hidden within you beyond your muscular and intellectual energy levels. Then suppose one day you feel depressed; your muscular energy is then of no help to you, your intellectual energy also is of no help to you. Then you tell your mind: Why are you in this depressed state? You are the infinite Ātman, you have infinite energy hidden within you, you are a child of Immortality—*amṛtasya putra*, as the Upaniṣads proclaim, or as Jesus said: 'the Kingdom of Heaven is within you'. When this truth even slightly dawns on you, you wake up from your state of weakness, from the condition of depression, your weakness slowly vanishes, you feel strong, you feel confident. This is not like the old psychology's prescription of autosuggestion; it is the autosuggestion of waking up to an ever-present truth from a temporary clouding of it. And since that truth is present in all, waking to it makes you also loving and compassionate in your inter-human relationships. This is the perennial message of Vedānta. In Indian literature, this message of Vedānta is compared to the lion-roar— *siṁha-garjana:* 'Let the lion of Vedānta roar', says Swami Vivekananda, 'and the foxes of fear and hatred and pettiness will fly to the holes!'

Men and women in modern civilization need great spiritual strength to be able to live sane, happy, and fulfilled lives; at present this unique strength is not there. Life throws us up and down like shallow-rooted trees getting shaken and uprooted by even mild winds. Don't we read in the press about wide-spread corruption and bribery in high places? Don't we hear even powerful men and women falling down through various money and sex temptations? Why should this happen? The answer is: They are not rooted in strength. If a tree is rooted well, it won't fall down when even a strong wind blows on it. I like very much a reference to this subject given by Jesus in his famous *Sermon on the Mount:*

> 'A foolish man built his house on sand; and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was its fall. But a wise man built his house on rock; and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, because it was built on rock.

What a beautiful example! All of you, in the course of your education, please ask this question yourselves: On what base shall I build my character, my personality? On sand? or on rock? If it is sand, you will fall down with the slightest touch of a breeze of shock, trauma, or temptation; if it is rock, you will stand strong and steady against all such adverse winds. What stands for this sand, and for this rock, with respect to human life? Sand stands for our psycho-sensory system, says Vedānta, and rock stands for the *Tat,* 'That', the divine spark, the deeper spiritual dimension, within all. When you build your character on that deeper rock-like foundation, it becomes strong and steady and humanistic, when, on the other hand, you build it only on your sensory and psychic system, which is by nature volatile and unsteady, it remains weak and unsteady and at the mercy of the energies of your sensory system and the sensory environment. That is the type of education that we need today from our early years—education that helps us to dig deep up to that rock foundation and steadily raise on it the edifice, strong and steady, of our character and personality.

This is the meaning of the new stress on *learning to be,* as Vedānta sees it and interprets it, in addition to *learning to know and to do.* The new-born baby has very little strength—muscular, intellectual or spiritual; but it throws up its hands and feet, goes on pushing and pulling things around it, takes physical nourishment from its mother, first, and other sources, later, and slowly builds up its muscular strength and intellectual strength; along with this, it must be helped to develop also its spiritual strength. In this way, when it reaches the adolescent age, at the stage at which you all are now, it will have increasing command over its inner spiritual resources. As a child, you push and pull things to gain your physical and mental strength, and as an adult, that very world pushes and pulls you about and tests your spiritual strength! It is this spiritual strength that will help it then to get beyond the limitations and pushes and pulls of its organic system as well as its sensory environment. It will expand its mind and heart, its interests and sympathies, beyond the limitations of its genetic system and feel its oneness, spiritual kinship, with others around it. This is what Vedānta calls man's spiritual and ethical growth.

11. *Evolution: Organic versus Psycho-social*

What Vedānta calls spiritual growth is what today's biology calls psycho-social evolution. Our twentieth-century biology is far more advanced than our nineteenth-century biology. Nineteenth-century biology saw struggle and competition everywhere in nature as an integral part of the evolutionary process—the strong survive and the weak get crushed. And that century carried over that theory of evolution into the human sphere as well, out of which we witnessed neck and neck colonialist, imperialist, and commercialist competitions, accompanied by violent wars and revolutions and inter-war social tensions. But after 100 years of revolutionary developments in this great science, it sees evolution in a new light in this post-Second-World-War period of the second half of this tumultuous century. *I very much wish that this new truth of biological evolution and its immense significance to man and his civilization are presented by our education to children in all educational institutions.*

How does twentieth-century biology see evolution? Cosmic evolution rises to the level of organic evolution with the appearance of the living cell, which is endowed with a rudimentary awareness of its external environment and which biology treats as the first great break through in evolution, with matter getting the power to duplicate itself. From now on, cosmology becomes biology. Cells multiply and become integrated into organs and organisms. Through such processes of diversification and integration, after long ages, evolution produces man endowed by nature with his wonderful and versatile organ, namely, the celebral system, with its capacity to invent any organs man may need, to alter its external natural environment, and to have self-knowledge over and above knowledge of the external environment. Unlike other species in nature, you have to wait for nature's slow and wasteful processes to evolve new organs within you. This cerebral system helps you to invent wings in the aeroplane to fly. You are no more a slave to external physical nature; you are free to control nature and shape your own evolution. Nature has endowed you with new powers, reason, will, imagination, and speech communication; she has also endowed you with a new inheritance, namely, *cultural,* over and above the *genetic* which you share with other species. Culture is defined by biology as cumulative experience, the capacity of mind to duplicate itself, in the form of science, philosophy, religion, art etc., and pass it on to succeeding generations. Biology treats this as the second breakthrough in evolution.

It is on the nature of that evolution at the human stage that twentieth-century biology has something unique to say. It says that, at the human stage, evolution has risen from the organic to a new level; and what is that new level? Evolution at the human stage has become primarily *psycho-social* evolution. What does biology mean by this psycho-social evolution? The human psyche, till now confined to, and limited by, this little genetic or organic system of man, becomes capable of detaching itself from that system and expanding in understanding, love, sympathy, and compassion, so as to enter into, and to be entered into by, millions of other psyches in society.

12. *Psycho-social Evolution as Spiritual Growth*

*Thus you will realize that what biology calls psycho-social evolution is what Ved*ānta calls the spiritual growth of man. Just as there is a physical growth of man, just as there is an intellectual growth of man, so there is also such a thing as this spiritual growth of man. Mere intellectual growth does not constitute your psycho-social evolution, since it does not, by itself, take one beyond the pressures and pulls of the organic system. You are seeing so many people around you with high intellectual growth; but you see them also committing anti-social acts like bribery, crime, violence, and exploitation of others. Therefore, mere intellectual growth is not enough; for in that growth you are still tied down to your genetic system and views everything and everybody else in terms of the profit and pleasure of your own genetic system. But psycho-social evolution as spiritual growth takes you beyond all such genetic limitations and makes you feel a spiritual oneness with millions of other psyches in society. This is the meaning of love and compassion; and this is the energy that the world must develop today through the science and technique of spirituality, through taking the first steps, and marching steadily, on the long road of psycho-social evolution, along with developing nuclear, solar, or other forms of physical energy resources through the help of the physical sciences. Technology of physical science gives us only that same muscular energy multiplied a million-fold, such as you find in the modern space rockets. But modern man is realizing slowly but steadily that the supreme energy is the energy of the spirit, manifested as love. And it is located in the depths of every one.

In this connection, you will be interested to hear a statement made by Napoleon who was a consummate wielder of the sword and the gun and a great military genius. When you study European history and study Napoleon's part in it, you are struck by the high efficiency and organizing power of his mind, of his tremendous capacity to win battles with even a small number of soldiers capable, sometimes, to take more prisoners than the number of his own soldiers. Then he lost everything in 1814 at Waterloo at the hands of the British and, a year later, the British sent him as a prisoner to the isolated island of St. Helena to the west of Africa, where he died six years later. He seems to have become somewhat wiser during that hard life, contemplating his ambitious and wonderful life and career. A bit of that wisdom finds expression in a remark he made to his prison companion, which I read long ago in a book the name of which I do not remember now:

> There are in the world two powers—the spirit and the sword. And the spirit has always vanquished the sword. Alexander, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, and I founded great empires. But upon what did the creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded his empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for him!

That is a unique testament to the power of love from a man like Napoleon who used the entire resources of state and church to further his ambition by force. We must realize the truth of that statement today. We have developed enormous physical resources; we have developed enormous intellectual resources; we have developed and stocked piles of highly destructive armaments. But all this development is making man, individually and collectively, a focus of tension, sorrow, alienation, and unfulfilment, and the possible ultimate destroyer of all life, in the absence of the development of the ever-present spiritual energy resources within him. *The modern age demands that the knowledge and technique of the unfolding of this tremendous spiritual energies in man must become an integral part of all education.* Otherwise, that education will remain imperfect and inadequate to meet the tremendous challenges thrown by the modern age. That is the significance of what I referred to earlier as the need for a new stress on *learning to be* in all education.

13. *Importance of Meditation in Education*

When you are outwardly active, working and interacting with other human beings, you are in the field of learning todo;when you sit down and are silently active in an inward penetration through meditation and such other techniques, and cease to be gregarious, you are in the field of the processes of learning to be. And when you combine both in education, you get a complete education, synthesizing learning to do and learning to be. And Vedānta is the philosophy of such a comprehensive education and unified human life. Meditation gives you insight into your own inner dimension, your own hidden possibilities. When you discipline the sense organs and the sense-bound mind and turn their energies towards the inner man, your come in touch with the profound spiritual dimensions of your being. When these same energies, bearing the purifying and elevating touch of the divine within, are later turned outward into the field of work and inter-human relations, they scatter fearlessness, love, and peace all-round, they bear the touch of the union of *philanthropic efficiency with philosophic calm,* in the language of the British sociologist late Herbert Spencer *(Study of Sociology,* p.403, Eighth Edition).

This is the message of the philosophy of *yoga* of the *Bhagava-Gītā.* There are many types of *yoga,* with limited relevances, among which the *yoga* expounded in the *Gītā* is alone of universal relevance. It exhorts every one of you to combine meditation with work, inward penetration with outward action. With the help of this philosophy of *yoga* as expounded in the *Gītā,* we can transform modern civilization into a stable, rich, and beautiful human achievement.

Education for both learning to do and learning to be is helped by the practice of meditation; because doing becomes an outflow of an enriched being within. Meister Eckhart, the great German mystic of the thirteenth century, expresses this truth beautifully: What you take in by contemplation, that you pour out in love. About the glory of meditation, here are a few relevant quotations from there great men. To the question: 'Then must not true reality be revealed to her (the soul) in thought, if at all?', Socrates answers in the affirmative and adds (*The Dialogues of Plato,* Vol. I, p. 416B, Jowett's Edition):

> 'And thought is best when the mind is gathered into herself and none of these

> things trouble her—neither sounds nor sights nor pain, nor again any pleasure—when she takes leave of the body, and has as little as possible to do with it, when she has no bodily sense or desire, but is aspiring after true being.'

The English poet Wordsworth refers to it, in his *Tintern Abbey*, as being: 'laid asleep in body and become a living soul'. Here is an ecstatic utterance by Swami Vivekananda in the course of a talk given to a select group in the West in the 1890's on *Saddhanas* or *Preparations to Higher Life (The Complete Works*, Vol.V, Seventh Edition, p.253):

> 'So, then, this tremendous determination to struggle, a hundred-fold more determination than that which you put forth to gain anything which belongs to this (external) life, is the first great preparation.
>
> 'And then, along with it, there must be meditation. Meditation is the one thing. Meditate! The greatest thing is meditation. It is the one moment in our daily life that we are not at all material—the Soul thinking of Itself, free from all matter—this marvellous touch of the Soul!'

14. *Conclusion*

I am very happy to be with all of you this afternoon. I convey to you my love and best wishes. I hope you will acquire for yourself, through institutional help, and through your own self-effort, an all-round education, enriching you, physically, mentally, and spiritually. It is thus that you also become instruments for saving modern civilization. Let me conclude my talk by sharing with you two ancient Sanskrit hymns, which breathe the spirit of universality and human unity, the spirit of the modern world trends towards a mankind awareness and international peace:

Sarve bhavaṅtu sukhiṇaḥ
sarve santu nirāmayāh;
Sarve bhadrāṇi paśyantu
mā kaścit dukkha-bhāk bhavet—

'May all (beings) be happy; may all (beings) be free from ailments (physical or mental); may all (beings) experience what is good and auspicious; and may none be subject to sorrow and suffering!'

Durjanaḥ sajjano bhūyāt
sajjanaḥ śānthim āpnuyāt;
Śānto mucyeta bandhebhyo
muktaścānyān vimocayet—

'May the wicked people be transformed into good people; may the good people achieve peace; may the peaceful people be free from all bondage; and may the free ones help also to free others (still in bondage)!'

I am sure you will all agree that these are beautiful prayers for universal welfare. For everyone, it is good to think on these lines every morning. That will help to project a wonderful wave of goodness and love and peace into the world. At present, many people throw waves of hatred and violence into the world, adding an increasing mental pollution to the ever-increasing environmental pollutions; but it is time that more people learn to send out waves of love and peace, after manufacturing these values within oneself. Don't you think that is beautiful? I thank you all.

You are now free to ask any questions and I shall be glad to answer them according to my understanding. (applause)

15. *Question-Answer Session*

Question: Swami, you spoke of growing spiritually. Does it mean that one thereby becomes good in himself or herself, and does it mean that by developing oneself spiritually, one helps to make the world also good?

Answer: Yes, that is true. When what is good in you unfolds, it affects the world in a good way. If it is merely hidden within oneself, one does not affect the outside. The truth of the divine is there within but, until it is unfolded, manifested, one does not benefit oneself or others. Suppose there is gold hidden below the earth. You do not become rich thereby. You have to dig that gold and bring it out through the science and technique of geology. Similarly, when you unfold the divine that is inherent in you, you achieve spiritual growth and inner enrichment and, through that inner enrichment, you enrich the world outside through your work and human interactions in society.

Question: But one can also grow in the wrong way?

Answer: Yes; if one is not properly guided, that is possible. But if one follows the science and technique of spiritual growth, there is no possibility of growing in the wrong way. The main question in the science of spirituality, as in the science of agriculture, is: have you grown? That is a beautiful idea. You have achieved some little spiritual growth, by the time you are 5 or 6 years old, when you show a little love and concern for others. But if you have not grown beyond it when you reach the age of 80, then we detect stagnation. That we should not allow to happen. Suppose when we plant a tree, it has two leaves; then it grows by putting forth more leaves, twigs, branches, finally flowers and fruits. That is the science of growth as applied to agriculture. Similarly, there is a science of growth as applied to man as a whole.

Question: Swami, if we have to meditate, on what subject should we meditate? Must we think about ourselves or other people?

Answer: We should meditate upon that divine dimension hidden in you, in me, in all. That is the truth *hidden* in man but *discovered* by the scientists of religion, just like the truth of gravitation discovered by the scientist Newton in physical nature. Similarly, the sages discovered, during their investigation into the depth of the human spirit, God in every human being. It is a *truth* and not a mere *opinion*. A truth which can be re-discoverd by every one and, through such re-discovery, every human being becomes richer and fuller and stronger. It is this divine truth that dwells in all beings, that deserves to be the subject of meditation.

This is a truth enshrined not only in Indian spiritual thought, but forms the central theme of advanced spiritual thought everywhere in the world. Does not Jesus assure us that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us? Here is a beautiful verse by the famous Persian sufi mystic and poet, Jalaluddin Rumi:

'In each human spirit is a Christ concealed,
to be helped or hindered, to be hurt or healed;
If from any human soul you lift the veil,
you will find a Christ therein hidden without fail.'

When you sit down to meditate, you first withdraw the senses and mind within; then imagine your mind to be a full-blown lotus, in which shines the light of Pure Consciousness, the light of God. Meditate on that light. Symbols like light are helpful in meditation.

If you are inclined towards the personal aspect of God or one of His Divine Incarnations, you may condense that light into that form; and at the end of meditation, merge back that form into that light. There are different forms of meditation to suit different temperaments and tastes, say Vedānta and yoga.

Question: Swami, can we do such meditation without outside help?

Answer: In the beginning, we may have to take outside help from books and from other people who have experience in that path. As in physical science, when we do research, we take help from another scientist guide in that field, here also, we need help and guidance, at least in the early stages, for research into the science of man in depth. India treats it as the pre-eminent science because it is directly concerned with human fulfilment, whereas the physical sciences contribute to it only indirectly. We have to approach it just like any other science. That is the view of Vedānta. Whereas in the Western experience, religion and science have been in permanent conflict and religion itself has also been in permanent conflict with its own different denominations, it was never so in India. They complement each other. India discovered and constantly emphasized the fundamental unity of religions and the fundamental unity of religion and science. Physical science and technology can build a house for you and equip it with all gadgets; but it cannot ensure that you live and work and sleep in it happily and peacefully. For that, you have to seek the help of another science, the science of spirituality. Happiness and peace come from the proper discipline of mind and not from mere possession of things. *Thus, from the Indian point of view, physical sciences and the science of spirituality complement each other* and both are needed to make human life fulfilled individually and collectively.

Question: Swami, but physical science does good to everyone; can we say the same with regard to religion?

Answer: Yes. but only if you approach religion as a science of man's spiritual growth, development, and fulfilment, and not as a static piety or exclusive creed and dogma.

Question: Yes, but is this not very personal?

Answer: Yes. The science of religion deals with the 'within' of nature as revealed in a human being, while the physical sciences deal with the 'without' of nature as revealed in inanimate matter. You are a person and you cannot deal with yourself the way physical science deals with inanimate matter. That will be disastrous to yourself; and that is what physical science has done to man today, *making him or her into a machine and making him or her also believe that he or she is a machine*. That is a tragedy. Even some of the modern agnostic thinkers, apart from existentialist philosophers, have rebelled against this treatment of man as a mere machine. Says Bertrand Russell *(The Impact of Science on Society*, pp.80-82):

> 'You may view an individual, (a) as a common man, (b) as a hero, (c) as a cog in the machine. ...
>
> 'The cog theory, though mechanically feasible, is humanly the most devastating of the three. ... You can only justify the cog theory by the worship of the machine. ... In time, men will come to pray to the machine: "Almighty and most merciful Machine, we have put in those nuts which we ought not to have put in, and we have left out those nuts which we ought to have put in, and there is no cogginess in us"—and so on.
>
> 'This really won't do. The idolatry of the machine is an abomination. The Machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism. ... Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget.

Question: Yes, I am a person; but I am just an individual. So I have to have my own science and you have to have your own science. Then how do you speak of the science of human possibilities covering everyone?

Answer: There is a difference between a physical scientist, say, a physicist, dealing with physical objects, and a scientist of religion dealing with one's own inner life. When you deal with the external world in physical science, you are dealing with *objects;* a scientist is dealing with objects which are common to all. But when the scientist is dealing with his inner life, he or she is dealing with a *subject,* with a very intimate part of human experience. The knowledge he or she gains of that object will be of no use to him or her in dealing with his or her *subject* dimension or in his or her having happy interactions with other human beings. If a physicist deals with wife or husband or other human beings in terms of that knowledge of physics only, he or she will make a mess of his or her marriage. That knowledge has no use or relevance there. He or she must seek another science, namely, the science of man in depth, in order to achieve happy and successful human relationships. The world of the subject appears to be private while the world of the objects appears to be public. Many twentieth-century scientists, especially physicists and psychologists, however, have come to the conclusion today that the *exclusion of the subject* from the study of the object, in the interest of objectivity, was but a convenient abstraction, a device useful in the short term but harmful and not true in the long term. Nature does not know such a distinction. Subject and object are one from a deeper point of view. Also, the more deep you go into yourself, the more wide and comprehensive become your understanding and sympathy. That is what you gain by that psycho-social evolution referred to earlier. Let us hear what physicist Erwin Schrödinger has to tell us on this subject in the light of nuclear physics (*What is Life? Mind and Matter*, pp.136-37, 1977 Edition):

> 'We are given to understand that, under the impact of our refined methods of observation and of thinking about the results of our experiments, that mysterious boundary between the subject and the object has broken down. ...
>
> 'Subject and object are only one. The barrier between them cannot be said to have broken down as a result of recent experience in the physical sciences; for, this barrier does not exist.'

To begin with, in your primitive stage, you treat both the world of natural objects and social objects, i. e. other human beings, as *objects;* and you treat yourself as a *subject,* and all objects are meant to be exploited in the interest of the subject, that is, you. Man soon discovered that that was immoral, unethical; other beings are also *subjects* like oneself and should be recognized and treated as subjects. *This recognition of a subject in a social object, i.e., man, is ethical sense.* This recognition and its further development depends entirely on man's capacity to penetrate inwards to the spiritual dimensions of his personality. *The more inward you go, the more widespreading in range and depth becomes your capacity to dig affections in other people.* You thus break down barriers to neighbourliness. At the circumference of a circle, all the radii are different; these differences diminish as one proceeds towards the centre, and completely vanish when one reaches the centre from where one can have direct and spontaneous connection with any point at the circumference. *All spiritual growth is a movement towards that one centre where all the objects and subjects meet;* that is the idea of God in Vedānta. Please listen to the following definition of God and man given by Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on *Worshipper and Worshipped* in San Francisco area in 1900 *(The Complete Works,* Vol.VI, p.56, Sixth Edition):

> 'The soul is a circle of which the circumference is nowhere, but the centre is in the body. God is a circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is everywhere!'

Thus all spiritual growth gives one not only increasing spiritual energy resources *but also greater efficiency in dealing with other human beings as subjects like oneself,* and also in dealing with the world of objects. This is the growth that humanity needs today to deal successfully with the enormous human distortions in our civilization. Why should any one live in fear and anxiety? Why should any one has to go always to a psychotherapist to set right his or her mental life? Why not prevent it? This science of man must come first, so that no inner discord appears which is to be cured by somebody else. *This is the science that is fundamental to human life and welfare. Every other science becomes useful only after this science has strengthened man.* It is like watering the root of the tree by which the whole tree is nourished, which is not achieved by watering only the leaves, twigs, and branches. No study of objects through physics or chemistry can help you when you as subject is distracted and distorted, except by some one else administering to you chemical drugs as curative agents, but never as preventive and dependable agents. External drugs can ruin both body and mind eventually. This drug 'religion', this complete dependence on external stimulants, is ruining many individuals and families today. As against it, there is this other beautiful science of man in depth which strengthens man in a fundamental way, like watering the root and nourishing the tree in a fundamental way.

Question: What do you think about Bhagavān Rajaneesh?

Answer: There are so many teachers offering so many teachings on religion to people. In such a situation, there is need to develop the power of discrimination; and only when you know the science of religion, you know how to discriminate. It is just like food; when you know the science of nutrition, you are able to discriminate whether the food is clean, hygienic, and nourishing. Similarly, with spiritual food, you must discriminate whether it is pure, clean, and nourishing. As in the food market, so also in the market of religion, you will come across wares which are a mixture of good, not so good, and positively bad; hence the need for discrimination. You must ask this question: Is it healthy? Will it conduce to spiritual growth? Will it conduce to happy inter-human relationships? People often fail to discriminate and jump at new and attractive things in religion, simply because they do not have the knowledge as to what constitutes the science of religion; they do not have the patience; they want to get religion cheap and in a capsule form; but religion needs intelligent effort and struggle. As we knock at the door of physical nature for discovering scientific truths, so we need to knock at the door of our inner nature to discover scientific truths in the spiritual field. That is why Vedānta speaks of the scientific search of religion as 'walking on the edge of a razor' in the language of the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (3.14):

Uttiṣṭhata, jāgrata, prāpya varān nibodhata;
Kṣurasya dhārā niśitā duratyayā
durgaṁ pathastat kavayo vadanti—

'Arise, Awake! and approaching the great (sages), enlighten yourself, for, like walking on the sharp edge of a razor is that path, difficult to tread and hard to cross—so say the sages (who have gone that way).'

What a beautiful statement it is! It is true with respect to every science, physical or spiritual, with respect to every human endeavour to achieve greatness in any field. We have to struggle with courage and determination. Here is the first line of a song which Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) loved to sing: 'Dive deep, dive deep, dive deep, O my mind, into the ocean of beauty!' You must dive deep into experience; if you swim only on the surface, you will get only cheap shells; but if you want pearls, you have to dive deep! We should approach religion in a heroic spirit of search for truth, of adventure in the search for knowledge, with a questioning rational mind. Physical science is universal and practical, so also is the science of spirituality. In a complete education, both streams must flow together. Did not the great Einstein say that science without religion is blind and religion without science is lame?

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SCIENCE AND HUMAN VALUES IN MODERN INDIA *

1. *Introductory*

I AM very thankful to the Director of the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, for inviting me to participate in this Convocation and to address you this afternoon. I have had occasions to address all the other four I.I.T.s in India. It is a stimulating experience for me to meet with the distinguished teachers and large numbers of students of our various Institutes of Technology which are devoted to bringing to India the blessings of modern Western science and technology. During a brief speech scheduled for this Convocation Address, it is not possible to deal with the most important issues that face our nation today adequately. But I would like to highlight two or three ideas which can help to stimulate the thinking of our students, teachers, and citizens and give that thinking a human orientation.

2. *Ancient India's Contribution to Science*

The first truth that our people in India have to realize is that our country has contributed substantially to the development of the physical sciences and technology during the five thousand years of our long history. No civilization can develop without the development of technology. And India had developed a high level of civilization, beginning with the highly sophisticated urban civilization of the Indus Valley, with its wonderful town-planning, public drainage, public baths, ship-building and ship-repair docks, and other features, down to about 1800 A.D. Along with technology, these civilizations had also developed the theoretical aspects of several physical sciences like physics, chemistry, life sciences, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, surgery, metallurgy, linguistics, and grammar.

Our national scientific mind and scientific activity started experiencing a decline about 800 years ago, after a flourishing period of over 3,000 years, and became lulled into sleep after the establishment of the British Empire in India, which took every conceivable step to stifle and destroy, in the interest of the emerging modern scientific, technological, and industrial revolution in Britain, India's age-old scientific, technological, educational, and socio-economic structures and systems.

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* **Based on the tape record of the speech delivered at the 21st Convocation of the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, on** 31 July 1984

Since the seventeenth century, the modern West has taken to science and technology and, within these three hundred years, carried both to unprecedented heights of achievements. While doing so, the West had also to struggle against the dogmas of Christianity organized in a powerful and militant Church which tried, unsuccessfully, to suppress the scientific spirit and temper and research at every step. Such a phenomenon is a purely Western experience, and our people in India should know this second truth that, in India's long history, there has never been an effort to suppress the spirit of free and rational inquiry and investigation which is the life-blood of all science; and this was because Indian culture had given a high place to physical science and all rational inquiry, and had also carried over that scientific and rational approach and temper into the other great field of investigation, namely, religion. And India had accordingly developed and perfected the science of religion into a science of spiritual growth, development, and fulfilment of man, into *a science of human possibilities,* to use an expression coined by the late biologist and humanist, Sir Julian Huxley.

It is this favourable cultural *milieu* that gave the stimulus to modern India *to re-start* her age-old scientific career in the modern period, unobstructed by any negative theological or social tradition. It started in a humble way with the organization of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science in Calcutta on 15 July 1876 by Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar who, in spite of being a frank agnostic, it is instructive to note, had close and intimate associations with Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore by Jamshedji N. Tata in 1911, who was also closely associated earlier with Swami Vivekananda. From such small beginnings, and often against official opposition from the foreign British Government, our country has by now built up a fine tradition of modern science and technology so as to attain the status of being third among the nations of the world in scientific man-power resources. In his book *The Discovery of India,* Jawaharlal Nehru, who has done much to foster modern science and technology in our country, has expressed the view that science, which has much leeway to make in India compared to the Western nations, is bound to advance steadily here because of the hospitality of the Indian national heritage to all science. All our students and teachers must know this truth about their culture, that their country did not create and up- country, has expressed the view that science, which has much leeway faith against reason, religion against science, religion against religion, mind against matter, and the natural against the supernatural (pp. 626-27):

> 'Science has dominated the Western world, and everyone there pays tribute to it, *and yet the West is still far from having developed the real temper of science. It has still to bring the spirit and the flesh into creative harmony.* In India, in many obvious ways, we have a greater distance to travel. And yet, *there may be fewer major obstructions on our way, for the essential basis of Indian thought for ages past, though not in its later manifestations, fits in with the scientific temper and approach,* as well as internationalism. It is based on a fearless search for truth, on the solidarity of man, even on the divinity of everything living, and on the free and co-operative development of the individual, and species, ever to greater freedom and higher stages of human growth.'

Again, in his lecture on *Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda,* he says (p. 2):

> 'India never ignored, in the course of her long history, and in spite of the other activities of the world, the spiritual values of life; and she always laid certain stress on the search for truth, and has always welcomed the searchers of truth by whatever names they may call themselves. And so India built up this tradition of the search for truth and reality and, at the same time, she built up the tradition of the utmost tolerance to those who earnestly strive for the truth in their own way.'

When you study the history of science, you will find that our country, as also China, have contributed substantially to the physical sciences, both pure and applied. We have the remarkable nine-volume edition of *Science and Civilization in China* by Joseph Needham published by the Cambridge University Press. We have, apart from several separate studies, a similar but more modest volume entitled *A Concise History of Science in India* by Bose, Sen, and Subbarayappa and published by the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi. We also have a recent book entitled *Indian Science and Technology in the Eighteenth Century: Some Contemporary*

European Accounts by Dharmapal. In his brief Foreword to this book, our eminent scientist, educationist, and humanist, Dr. D.S. Kothari says:

> 'Shri Dharmapal had done a valuable service to history of sciences and technology in India by compiling this collection of highly interesting and informative articles by British scientists and travellers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These have been reproduced from the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburg, and material available in the British Museum and the India Office. Shri Dharmapal has spent much time and labour in the preparation of this publication which represents a significant contribution to the meagre, but growing, literature on the history of science in India.'

Shri Dharmapal has also written another similar revealing book: *The Beautiful Tree: Indigenous Indian Education in the Eighteenth Century,* also from contemporary European accounts. Through these books, he has opened up an important and relevant area of study, of national and international interest, by batches of interested research scholars. Such present and future studies into the truth of Indian history will help us to discover the immense richness and diversity of our long and uninterrupted history and culture in a new light, that our country in 1750 A.D. was more advanced in science and technology than European countries during the same period. It will dispel the current attitude of defeatism and cynicism, with respect to their motherland, afflicting many of our intellectuals, and create in all our people a robust faith in themselves and in their country's past, and the strength and confidence to work for a brighter national future.

Science in ancient India has received a glorious tribute from an Arab Muslim scientist of eleventh-century Moorish Spain, Abu'l-Qāsim Sāid bin Abdur Rahmān bin Muhammad bin Sāid al-Andalusî, in his book, written in 1068 A.D., and entitled: *Tabaquāt al-Umam* (Categories of Nations: An Arabic History of Science and Culture). Discussing this work, Dr.M. Saber Khan says, in his article on *India in Hispano-Arabic Literature: An Eleventh-century Hispano-Arabic Source for Ancient Indian Sciences and Culture,* contributed to the Prof. H.K. Sherwani Felicitation Volume entitled *Studies in the Foreign Relations of India*—from the earliest times to 1947, published by the Andhra Pradesh State Archives (pp. 358-59):

> 'Qādî Ṣāid opens his work by enumerating the nations of antiquity and divides them into two categories — those that have specially occupied themselves with the

cultivation of sciences, and made contributions to them, and those that have not done so. In the former, he mentions the following eight ancient and medieval nations who had contributed most to the study and development of sciences: the Indians, the Persians, the chaldeans, the Greeks, the Romans, the Egyptians, the Arabs, including those of Spain, and the Israelites. ...

'The first nation (that has cultivated the sciences) is (the people of) India, who form a nation vast in numbers, powerful, with great dominions. All former kings and past generations have acknowledged their wisdom and admitted their pre-eminence in the various branches of knowledge. ...

'Among all the nations, during the course of centuries and throughout the passage of time, India was known as the mine of wisdom and the fountainhead of justice and good government, and the Indians were credited with excellent intellects, exalted ideas, universal maxims, rare inventions, and wonderful talents.'

3. *India's Modern Adventure in Science Faced with a Question mark*

We must reckon with the tragic fact that many of our educated people, even today, belong to that class that has succumbed to our foreign ruler's assiduous efforts, through the educational system introduced by Macaulay, along with his famous Minutes, in 1835-36, and through the various books on India written by other Western scholars, to de-nationalize our educated sections, and even make many of them ashamed of their motherland's culture, philosophy, and religion. But during the last ten or twelve decades, we have witnessed a national re-awakening and developed the strength to withstand these weakening influences, and used that very Western connection, and the newly acquired English language, to forge a more glorious epoch of our history and culture in the modern period. And in that process, we have been taught, by our modern teachers like Swami Vivekananda, to appreciate, and gratefully welcome, the great scientific advances made by the modern West. Accordingly, our nation has seriously commenced *our modern adventure* in the field of science and technology. That adventure is not meant to be confined merely to the production of science graduates, technicians, research scholars, and teachers from our various centres of higher education and scientific research, but also to cover the education of the whole nation in the scientific outlook and temper and in its practical efficiency. Teachers like Swami Vivekananda have taught us that this wide diffusion of the scientific temper is essential, not only to remove the economic and social backwardness of millions of our people, but also to make our people capable to appreciate the rational and humanistic philosophy and spirituality of their age-old *Sanātana Dharma* and Vedānta.

Impressive as the progress in our modern scientific adventure is, we cannot avoid being troubled by a serious question mark facing it; and that question mark is this:

In spite of achieving the high rank of being third in the world in scientific man-power resources, why is our country still backward and undeveloped? Why have we with us still, after 37 years of political freedom, the problem of over 300 million of our people living poor and dismal lives? Why has not our science, why has not our technology, conferred that blessing of economic development and general social welfare on our country which it conferred on the Western countries and Japan?

This question must be asked, and correct answers and remedies found, by every student of science and technology in our country today. We must feel it deeply as a blot on our nation that, after 37 years of political independence, six five-year plans, and crores of rupees of investments, our country is still in the category of the undeveloped. That undeveloped status stares us in the face, not only in our dismal poverty, but also in the areas in which we have the *appearance* of being technically and industrially developed, for example, in the poor state of our telephone services, both local and STD, and in our low ratio of productivity levels, against installed capacities, in the field of electricity and power generation.

4. *Vivekananda Provides the Answer*

Why is this so? What is wrong with us as a people? Everyone recognizes that our country is endowed with vast natural resources and our people are endowed with intellect and varied talents. Millions have acquired modern education, general and technical. Yet something is missing in us, and that is what we have to identify and rectify. Swami Vivekananda had diagnosed this ailment of ours decades ago *and our educated section stands in urgent need of a re-education from him today*. What a tragedy—the educated standing in need of a re-education! Concluding his address to a large public meeting in this very Madras City in 1897, on the subject of

Vedanta and Its Application to Indian Life, Swami Vivekananda said *(The Complete Works,* Vol.3, p.247, **Eighth Edition**):

> 'Bring all light into the world. Light, bring light! Let light come unto every one. The task will not be finished till every one has reached the Lord.
>
> 'Bring light to the poor; and bring more light to the rich, for they require it more than the poor.
>
> 'Bring light to the ignorant, *and more light to the educated, for the vanities of the education of our time are tremendous!* Thus bring light to all and leave the rest unto the Lord.'

The light that Swamiji refers to in the above passage is the light of Wisdom, over and above mere intellectual knolwedge; it is the light of knowledge coupled with human concern, with love, dedication, and service—the spontaneous by-product of spiritual growth. That is what lifts man above his or her genetic limitations and what makes for expansion of the human personality. *ātmavikāsa,* in love, sympathy, compassion, and service. This is what Vedānta calls the *spiritual growth of man,* and what twentieth-century biology calls *psycho-social evolution*—evolution rising from the organic to the ethical and humanistic levels, at the stage of man. Swamiji saw all our national evils proceeding from too much pre-occupation with oneself and too little concern for others. He sought to release the humanistic impulse in our people, out of which alone can emerge high character and the energy associated with it. 'All expansion is life, all contraction is death', he said. Selfishness, self-centredness, human unconcern, is contraction—death; unselfishness, ethical awareness, human concern, is expansion—life. In a letter written from Chicago to the Maharaja of Mysore in 1894, Swamiji expressed this truth about man in a great sentence (*Complete Works,* Vol. 4, pp. 362-63, 1962 Edition):

> 'The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. The poor in the West are devils; compared with them, ours are angels; and it is therefore so much the easier to raise our poor. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality.* ... Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries, and, at last, the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. ... This is what is to be done in India. ...

> '... This life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but *they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive!*'

Study this passage in the light of another passage written in the course of a letter to his dedicated Madras disciple Alasinga Perumal, in 1894, from Chicago (*ibid.*, Vol.5, pp.57-58, 1958 Edition):

> 'What India wants is a new electric fire to stir up a fresh vigour in the national veins. ... I see what they call the poor of this country, and how many there are who feel for them! What an immense difference in India! Who feels there for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? ... Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way. Him I call a *Mahātman* (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a *Durātman* (wicked soul). ... My heart is too full to express my feeling; you know it, you can imagine it. *So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.*'

5. *The Human Brain: Its Range and Scope*

Swamiji provides a social mirror for all our educated people to look into, in order to identify themselves, whether they are *alive* or *dead*, whether they are *traitors* or *patriots*. If our education has sharpened our intellects, it has failed to expand our hearts, it has failed to inspire us with the humanistic passion and impulse. What is knowledge worth if it is not yoked to love? When knowledge is yoked to human concern, it shines as character, for character is centred in a socially oriented will. That combination alone can achieve human development; it is there that we have failed; and it is there that we have to apply the remedy. If we can correct this imbalance and work hard during the remaining sixteen years of this century, we shall be in a position to reap all the benefits of a tremendous synthesis — the synthesis of knowledge and wisdom, the synthesis of the tested elements of the modern Western cultural inheritance with the tested elements of our own national cultural inheritance. This will give us a national character combining spirituality with practical efficiency.

We have to realize that knowledge, by itself, does not contain the energy of impact; that energy, so far as man is concerned, is the product of knowledge combined with a fund of emotions. Mere knowledge has no motive power. As remarked by the late Bertrand Russell :

You may know through your mathematics that any two sides of a triangle are longer than the third side; but the energy that motivates you to prefer to go by the shorter side or the longer sides does not come from that knowledge itself!

That energy of motivation comes from another source, another dimension of the human personality, namely, the emotions. If these emotions are centred in oneself — in one's own profit, pleasure, ambition, and advancement — we get high energy, no doubt, but of a negative type, like the un-refined crude oil taken out of the bowels of the earth, and tending towards exploitative, unethical, and often unscrupulous behaviour. For scruples stand in the way of personal ambition; and so, personal ambitions, if not refined and purified by ethical and human values, will brush aside all scruples and produce, what our Bhartṛhari, the poet-mystic-king of sixth-century after Christ, in verse 64 of his *Nīti-sátakam,* refers to as the *mānava-rākṣasas, rākṣasas* or demons in the form of human beings.

Behind every work, there is the energy of the emotions. 'Can even a bird build its nest without (the stimulus of) emotion?' asks the great neurologist, Sir Charles Sherrington. The emotion of birds, and of all sub-human species, is triggered, not by knowledge as in the case of man in the higher levels of his life, but by in-built genetic mechanisms, towards three goals, namely, organic satisfactions, organic survival, and numerical increase. Human emotions also, in the ordinary levels of life, are triggered by these. But they need not be the only way in a human being; in him, they can be guided by another energy, namely, knowledge, and towards higher purposes, namely, working for the good of all, such work becoming infused with greater energy because of the knowledge factor. Nature has endowed the human being with the cerebral system precisely for carrying his evolution, by himself and not depending on nature like all animals, to higher levels. But this knowledge-energy factor can be a danger, not only to oneself but to others also, if it is made to function as a servant of self-centredness, as a servant of that in-built genetic mechanism. Nature evolved the higher brain in man to be the director and the guide of the entire organic system, so as to guide its energies towards the goal of freedom, which is a spiritual value, not found anywhere else in physical nature — non-living or living. Discussing the uniqueness of this human organ, Bristol Neurologist Grey Walter says (*The Living Brain*, pp. 1-2):

> 'By brain is meant, in the first instance, something more than the pinko-grey jelly of the anatomist. It is, even to a scientist, the organ of imagination. "Enchanted loom" it was called by a great physiologist (Sir Charles Sherrington)! ...
>
> 'No other animal is equipped for being *sapiens*. ... We can imagine making one of a number of possible responses, and imagine it so clearly that we can see whether it would be, if we made it, a mistake, without having to commit ourselves to action. We can make our errors in a thought and reject them in another thought, leaving no trace of error in us. ...
>
> 'Thus the mechanisms of the brain reveal a deep physiological division between man and ape. ... The nearest creature to us, the chimpanzee, cannot retain an image long enough to reflect on it, however clever it may be in learning tricks or getting food that is placed beyond its natural reach. Unable to rehearse the possible consequences of different responses to a stimulus, without any faculty of planning, the apes and other animals cannot learn to control their feelings, first step towards independence of environment and eventual control of it. The activity of the animal brain is not checked to allow time for the choice of one among several possible responses, but only for the one reflex or conditioned response, to emerge. The monkey's brain is in thrall to its senses. *Sentio ergo sum* (I feel, therefore, I exist) might be the first reflection of a slightly inebriated ape, as it is often the last of alcoholic man; so near, and yet so far apart, even then, are they.
>
> 'The brain of lion, tiger, rhinoceros, and other powerful animals also lacks the mechanism of imagination, or we should not be here to discuss the matter! It was not power that won them survival in the earth's changes of climate, but thermostasis'.

And discussing the nature of this thermostasis and its contribution to the evolution of the human brain, Grey Walter continues (*ibid.*, p. 16-18):

> 'The acquisition of internal temperature control, thermostasis, was a supreme event in neural, indeed in all natural history. It made possible the survival of mammals on a cooling globe. That was its general importance in evolution. Its particular importance was that it completed, in one section of the brain, an automatic system of stabilization for the vital functions of the organism — a condition known as homeostasis. With this arrangement, other parts of the brain are left free for functions not immediately related to the vital engine or the senses, for functions surpassing the wonders of homeostasis itself.
>
> 'The matter is epitomized in a famous saying of the French physiologist, Claude Bernard: *La fixité du milieu intérieur est la condition de la vie libre* (a fixed interior *milieu* is the condition for the free life). Those who had the privilege of sitting under Sir Joseph Barcroft at Cambridge owe much to him for his expansion of this dictum and its application to physiological research. We might otherwise have been scoffers;

for "the free life" is not a scientific expression. He translated the saying into simple questions and guided us to the answers. "What has the organism gained," he asked, "by the constancy of temperature, constancy of hydrogen-ion concentration, constancy of water, constancy of sugar, constancy of oxygen, constancy of calcium, and the rest?" With his gift for quantitive expression, it was all in the day's work for him to demonstrate the individual intricacies of the various exquisitely balanced feed-back mechanisms. But I recall, in his manner, a kind of modest trepidation, as if he feared we might ridicule his flight of fancy, when he gave us this illustration of homeostasis and its peculiar virtue:

> "How often have I watched the ripples on the surface of a still lake made by a passing boat, noted their regularity, and admired the patterns formed when two such ripple-systems meet. *But the lake must be perfectly calm. ... To look for high intellectual development in a milieu whose properties have not become stabilized, is to seek... ripple-patterns on the surface of the stormy Atlantic.*"

'The upper brain is freed from the menial tasks of the body, the regulating functions being delegated to the lower brain.

'... *For the mammals all, homeostasis was survival; for man, emancipation. ...*'

And, relating this physiological mechanism of homeostasis, (called homeorhesis by Zoologist C.H. Waddington, in order to emphasize the sense of the *upward flow* of life energy, to replace *stasis* which implied 'standing still'), to *yoga* as a psychic homeostasis, to be acquired by man to achieve emancipation, what India calls *mukti,* Grey Walter concludes *(ibid.,* p.19):

> 'And once again, as new horizons open, we become aware of old landmarks. The **experience of homeostasis, the perfect mechanical calm which it allows the brain,** has been known for two or three thousand years under various appellations. It is the physiological aspect of all the perfectionist faiths — *nirvāṇa,* the abstraction of the Yogi, the peace that passeth understanding, the derided "happiness that lies within" it is a state of grace in which disorder and disease are mechanical slips and errors.'

Nature has achieved for man a physical homeostasis, by which his higher brain has been released from the 'menial tasks of the body' for functioning as the unique instrument of his higher evolution. In spite of this high role, if it is made to function as the *servant* of his organic system and not as its *master,* it will be like *the tail wagging the head of the dog!* The higher brain becomes truly higher when it achieves for man, by his or her own thoughtful efforts, a second homeostasis in his inner life, which Indian spirituality calls *śama* and *dama,* calming of the mind and calming of the senses, by which he or she realizes one's ever-present divine nature and sheds the status of a *jantu,* i.e. creature. This is the science of Yoga, which is defined in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* in a beautiful verse (6.10-11):

Yadā pancāvatiṣṭhante
jñānāni manasā saha;
Buddiśca na viceṣṭate
tāmāhuḥ paramāṁ gatim—

'When the five organs of perception or knowledge become steady, along with the mind, and even the intellect does not act, that is called the highest state (of existence).'

Tāṁ yogamiti manyante — 'That is called Yoga.'

6. *Knowledge versus Wisdom*

The discipline and training of the energy of the emotions, therefore, forms an important ingredient of human education. Here knowledge is trained, has to be trained, to choose between various emotions. Such a choice may be healthy and wholesome, or unhealthy and harmful. Healthy and wholesome choice is the product of an energy called in Sanskrit *viveka,* discrimination; and this is the unique function of the higher brain in man. And all ethical and humanistic values, what Vedānta calls *dharma,* proceed from this source which, when disciplined and refined, becomes, what the *Gītā* calls, *Buddhi,* enlightened Reason, and its wholesome character products, just as crude oil, by refining, becomes transformed into beautiful and useful petrolium products. Education must endow man, says Vedānta, not only with knowledge but also with *viveka,* with this refining capacity. That is how knowledge matures into wisdom; without that maturity, knowledge will be harmful. Knowledge, refined by *viveka,* confers moral strength and fearlessness which mere knowledge cannot give. One endowed with knowledge, moral strength, and, fearlessness is called a *dhīra* in Vedānta. It is a great word in Sanskrit expressing the two values of wisdom and courage or heroism. This is the energy that helps man to resist all temptations, monetary bribes, or sensual pulls—small or big—and walk steadily on the narrow path of justice, rectitude, and fairplay. The extreme opposite of *dhīra* is, what in English is called, man with feet of clay. One of the finest definitions of this term *dhīra* has been given by Bhartṛhari in verse 74 of his *Nīti-Śatakam*, which Swami Vivekananda loved to refer to:

Nindantu nīti-nipuṇāḥ, yadi vā stuvantu,
lakṣmī samāviśatu, gachatu vā yatheṣṭam;
Adyaiva vā maraṇamastu, yugāntare vā
nyāyyāt pathāt pravicalanti padaṁ na dhīrāḥ —

'Let sages blame, or let them praise, let the goddess of fortune come, or let her go away as she pleases; let death come just now, or at the end of the yuga, the *dhīra* never deviates his or her steps from the path of *nyāya* or justice.'

The distinction that Indian culture has always made between intellectual knowledge and spiritual wisdom is now being appreciated by some of the modern Western thinkers. Bertrand Russell, a truth-seeking modern agnostic, has given the clearest expression to this truth, and thereby highlighted the most serious problem facing modern man and modern scientific thought (*Impact of Science on Society*, p.121):

> 'Broadly speaking, we are in the middle of a race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends. Given sufficient folly as to ends, every increase in the skill required to achieve them is to the bad. The human race has survived hitherto owing to ignorance and incompetence; but, given knowledge and competence combined with folly, there can be no certainty of survival. Knowledge is power, but it is power for evil as much as for good. It follows that, *unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow.'* (italics not by the author)

Our ancient sages, as I said earlier, had made this distinction between knowledge and wisdom and had exhorted man to rise from knowledge to wisdom. The one word *jñāna* has been used in our Vedāntic and Buddhistic literature to indicate both knowledge and wisdom, the difference between the two is indicated by the scope and range of the term. The words *vijñāna* and *prajñā* are also sometimes used to indicate wisdom. If *jñāna* is the product of an inquiry into the *loka* dimension of reality, into the ever-changing data of the physical universe, it is just knowledge, intellectual knowledge. But if Jñāna rises to the *lokottara* dimension of reality, to the level of the transcendental dimension of the changeless One, the non-dual Ātman or Brahman, behind the changeful many, it signifies wisdom, it signifies *Bodhi* or illumined knowledge. This is the meaning of the *Bodhi* experience of Buddha; this is the meaning of the following luminous verses of the fourth chapter of the *Gīta* in praise of *jñāna* as wisdom (4.33-39) ·

Śreyān dravyamayāt yajñāt
jñāna-yajñāḥ parantapa;
Sarvaṁ karmākhilaṁ partha
jñāne parisamapyate —

'*Jñāna*-sacrifice, O scorcher of foes, is superior to *dravyu-maya* sacrifices (sacrifices performed with material objects); all *karma* or action, in its entirety, O Partha, attains its consummation in *jnana*.

Tat viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā;
Upadekṣyanti te jnānam
jnaninaḥ tattva-darsinaḥ —

'Know that (truth of *jñāna*) by prostrating yourself, by questioning, and by service; the *jñānis* (wise ones) who have realized the Truth will instruct you in that *jñāna.'*

Yat jñātvā na punarmoham
evaṁ yāsyasi pāṇḍava;
Yena bhūtānyaseṣeṇa
drakṣyasyātmanyatho mayi —

'Knowing which, you will not, O Pāṇḍava, again get deluded like this; and by which (*jñāna*) you will see the whole universe in your own Self and in Me (the one Self in all).'

Api cedasi pāpebhyaḥ
sarvebhyaḥ pāpakṛttamah;
Sarvaṁ jñāna-plavenaiva
Vṛjinaṁ santariṣyasi —

'Even if you be the most sinful among all the sinful, yet by the raft of *jnana* alone shall you cross over all sin.'

Yathaidhāṁsi samiddhogniḥ
bhasmasāt kurute' rjuna;
Jñānāgniḥ sarva-karmāṇi
bhasmasāt kurute tathā —

‘As a blazing fire reduces wood to ashes, even so, O Arjunaıa, does the fire of *jñāna* reduce all actions to ashes,’

Nahi jñānena sadṛśam
pavitram iha vidyate;
Tat svayaṁ yoga-saṁsiddhaḥ
kālenātmani vindati —

‘Verily, there exists nothing in this world so purifying as *jñāna;* reaching perfection in Yoga, in good time, one realizes that (*jñāna*) by oneself in one’s own heart.’

Śraddhāvān labhate jñānam
tat-paraḥ saṁyatendriyaḥ;
Jñānaṁ labdhvā parāṁ śāntim
na cireṇādhigachati —

‘One endowed with *śraddhā* (faith in one-self and in the meaningfulness of life), devoted to the highest Truth and with the senses disciplined, attains this *jñānam;* having attained this *jñānam* (he or she) attains at once the supreme peace.’

This rising from knowledge to wisdom, advocated by thinkers like Bertrand Russell, sounds like an echo of a famous exposition of the subject in India’s ancient *Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* chapter seven. That exposition, in the form of a dialogue between the much learned Nārada, as student, and the great sage Sanatkumāra, as teacher, illumines this important theme with a tremendous modern relevance (7.1-3):

Adhihi bhagava iti, hopasasāda sanatkumāraṁ nāradaḥ; taṁ hovāca, yad vettha, tena mopasīda, tataḥ te ūrdhvam vakṣyāmi iti — ‘Please teach me, O Blessed one’, saying this, Nārada approached Sanatkumāra.‘Tell me what you (already) know; (if there is) anything more than that to be known (and if I know it), I shall tell you.’

Sa hovaca: Rg-Vedaṁ bhagavo adhyemi, Yajur-Vedam, Sāma-Vedam, Ātharvaṇaṁ caturtham, itihāsa-purāṇaṁ pañcamam, vedānāṁ vedo, pitryam, rāśim, daivam, nidhim, ***vākovākyam,*** *ekāyanam, deva-vidyām, brahma-vidyām, bhūta-vidyām, kṣatra-vidyām, nakṣatra-vidyām, sarpa-deva-jana-vidyām — etat bhagavo adhyemi —*

'He (Nārada) replied: I have studied the *Rg-Veda,* O Blessed One, *Yajur-Veda, Sāma-Veda, Atharva-Veda* — the fourth, *itihāsa-purāṇam* (history and mythology) — the fifth *Veda,* grammar, rituals connected with ancestor worship, mathematics, knowledge relating to averting unforeseen calamities, minerology, logic, ethics, linguistics; knowledge of interpreting the *Vedas,* science of physics, military science, astronomy, science of snakes, knowledge of the fine arts (such as dance, drama, music, percussion instruments, and architecture) — all these, O Blessed one, I have studied.'

After enumerating these, Nārada observed further:

So'ham, bhagavo, mantravidevāsmi, na ātmavit; śrutaṁ hyeva me bhagavaddṛśebhyaḥ, tarati śokam ātmavit iti. So'haṁ bhagavaḥ śocāmi. Taṁ mā, bhagavan, śokasya pāraṁ tārayatu iti —

I am only a knower of words, words, words, O Blessed one, and not a knower of the Atman (the One Divine Self in all, of the nature of Pure Consciousness). I have, however, heard from blessed ones like you that only a knower of the Ātman crosses (the ocean of) sorrow. I am, indeed, O Blessed One, in sorrow. Please take me, O Blessed One, to the other shore of (the ocean of) sorrow.'

Tam hovaca: Yad vai kiṁcaitat adhyagīṣṭhāḥ, nāmaivaitat —
'(Hearing this, Sanatkumāra) said to him: Whatever you have thus studied, it is all mere name (belonging to the changing universe of name and form)!'

Then follow a series of passages describing Sanatkumāra's education of Nārada in the subtle, and still more subtle, dimensions of reality, and in the insight into the sources of sorrow and into the one source of all happiness. Later, Sanatkumāra tells Nārada (7.21.1):

Yo vai bhūmā, tat sukham; nālpe sukhamasti, bhūmaiva sukham; bhūmātveva vijiñāsitavyam iti —
'That which is infinite, that alone is happiness, there is no happiness in the finite. The infinite alone is happiness; the infinite alone is, therefore, to be sought after.'

Bhūmānam, bhagavo, vijijñāsa iti —
(Nārada then replied:) 'I should like to seek the infinite, O Blessed One.'

Yatra nāyat pasyati, nānyat sṣṇoti, nānyat vijānāti, sa bhūmā. Atha yatra anyat paśyati, anyat śṛṇoti, anyat vijānāti, tat alpam. Yo vai bhūmā, tat amṛtam; yat alpam, tat martyam —
'Where (one) does not see another (as separate), one does not hear another (as separate) does not know another (as separate), that is infinite. And where (one) sees another (as separate), hears another (as separate), knows another (as separate), that is small or finite. That which is infinite is alone immortal, and that which is small or finite, is indeed mortal.'

Hearing this, Nārada asked:
Sa, bhagavaḥ, kasmin pratiṣṭhita iti —
'On what is that (infinite) established, O Blessed One?'
And Sanatkumāra replied:
Sve mahimni, yadi vā, na mahimni iti —
'In its own glory, or not even in its own glory!'

Explaining the subtlety of this enigmatic statement, Sanatkumāra further said (7.24.1 and 24.1-2):

Go asvam, iha mahimā ityācakṣate, hasti, hiraṇyam, dāsaghāryam, kṣetrānyāyatanāni—nāham evaṁ bravīmi iti, hovaca; anyo hi anyasmin pratiṣṭhita iti.

Sa eva adhastāt, sa upariṣṭāt, sa paścāt, sa purastāt, sa dakṣiṇataḥ, sa evedaṁ sarvam iti … ātmaivedaṁ sarvam iti. … Sa vā evaṁ paśyan, evaṁ manvānaḥ, evaṁ vijānan, ātma-ratiḥ, ātma-mithunaḥ, ātmānandaḥ, sa svarāt bhavati; tasya sarveṣu lokeṣu kāmacāro bhavati.

Atha ye anyathāto vidhuḥ anya-rājānaḥ, te kṣayya-lokā bhavanti. Teṣāṁ sarveṣu lokeṣū akāmacāro bhavati—
'It is the current saying in this world that one's glory consists in cows, horses, elephants, gold, servant, wife (or husband), lands, and houses; I am not saying like this, that something which is itself different rests on another thing which is separate (from it); but thus I speak, said he (Sanatkumāra):

'He (the infinite) is, indeed, below, He is above, He is behind, He is in front; He is in the south, He is in the north — He indeed is all this!. … All this (manifested universe) is the Ātman only. …

'Anyone who sees thus, thinks thus, knows thus, revels in the Ātman, sports in the Ātman, is united with the Ātman, enjoys bliss in the Ātman. He becomes (truly) sovereign and free; he experiences freedom and spontaneity in all planes of existence. On the other hand, those who understand otherwise (the universe as separate from the Self), become dependent on things and beings other than themselves; they belong to the world of the perishable; they do not experience freedom and spontaneity in all planes of existence.'

Finally, concluding the whole chapter and theme, Sanatkumāra proclaims, in three lines, the whole subject of *adhyātma-vidyā,* i.e., *vidyā* or science of *adhyātma,* spirituality, and its glorious fruits of freedom from all bonds (7.26.2):

Āhāra śuddhau, sattva śudhiḥ;
sattva-śuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ;
Smṛti-laṁbhe sarva-granthīnāṁ vipramokṣaḥ.
tasmai mṛdita-kaṣāyāya
Tamasaḥ pāraṁ darśayati bhagavān Sanatkumāraḥ —

'When the food (what is taken in, physically and mentally) is pure, the *buddhi* (Reason) becomes pure; when the *buddhi* is pure, the memory (of one's divine immortal nature) becomes constant and steady; when this memory is attained, all the knots and complexes (of the heart) become destroyed (and one becomes free here and now).

'To him (Nārada), who had been purged of all impurities (of the heart), *Bhagavān* Sanatkumāra demonstrates (gives the experience of illumination, which is) the other shore (of the ocean) of darkness (i.e. spiritual ignorance and blindness.)'

7. *Need for Synthesis of Science and Spirituality*

I had said earlier that we, in India, have commenced our modern adventure in the field of science and technology. That adventure must cover the entire range of truth-seeking and knowledge-seeking, and not remain confined to physical sciences and technology. Many scientists, even in the West, are today dissatisfied with this erstwhile narrow interpretation given to science and to the scientific pursuit. Our students of science in India must keep in view the special Western cultural situation that led to this narrow interpretation and the West's consequent rejection of all religion as primitive superstition. But today, coming in touch with Indian culture and philosophy and its rational and experiential approach to religion, increasing numbers of Western scientists are feeling the inadequacies of their science and technology to lead man to peace, fearlessness, and total fulfilment, and are in search of 'the farther reaches of human knowledge'. They are led to this, not only from the deeper spiritual hints and suggestions coming from the farthest reaches of physical sciences themselves, but also from the pressures arising from the contemporary psychical and social distortions.

Knowledge destroys fear, is a great dictum, according to modern scientific as well as ancient Indian culture. India holds that complete fearlessness and fulfilment can be achieved only through a scientific pursuit of truth in the two fields of man's outer environment and man's inner environment; India calls the first, physical and positivistic science, and the second, the science of religion or spirituality; and India does not find any conflict between the two, but only perfect complementarity. Reality is one, says our Vedānta, and we can approach it from the without as well as from the within. A complete philosophy will be a synthesis, says Vedānta, of both the external, the *parāk svarūpa,* and the internal, the *pratyak svarūpa,* of one and the same Reality. This advaitic or unifying vision is the message of the *brahma-vidyā* or *Adhyātma-vidyā* of the Upaniṣads. As elucidated by Fritjof Capra in his book: *The Tao of Physics* (p. 211):

> 'The *Brahman* of the Hindus, like the *Dharmakāya* of the Buddhists and the *Tao* of the Taoists, can be seen, perhaps, as the ultimate unified field, from which spring not only the phenomena studied in physics, but all other phenomena as well.'

Religion, according to Vedānta, has two dimensions, namely, the ethnical, and the scientific or the spiritual. Ethnical religion is what is meant when we speak of Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and so on. We are *born in* an ethnical religion; we had no say in the matter. But religion becomes a science, when we *choose it, seek it.* Vedānta classifies religion *scientifically*, when it speaks of *Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga*, *Rāja yoga* and *Jñāna yoga*. No one is born in a science; he or she becomes a scientist by *seeking* it. In the words of the mathematician-astronomer, Sir Arthur Eddington (*Science and the Unseen World,* P. 54):

> 'You will understand the true spirit neither of science nor of religion unless seeking is placed in the forefront.'

So Vedānta holds that ethnical religion, which is mostly tribal and socio-political in its sympathies and outlook, is not the whole of religion; at best, it is a base on which we have to erect the superstructure of the science of religion; at its worst, it can be, and has been and still is, the source of superstition, narrowness, intolerance, and violence, and thus become a bane on human society. It is about this aspect of religion that Swami Vivekananda said, in a letter written to Sister Nivedita from London, in 1896 (*Complete Works,* Vol.7, p. 489):

> 'My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is; to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every moment of life. ...
>
> 'One idea that I see clear as daylight is that misery is caused by *ignorance,* and nothing else. Who will give the world light? Sacrifice in the past has been the law; it will be, alas, for ages to come! The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves *for the good of the many, for the welfare of all.* Buddhas by the hundreds are necessary with eternal love and pity.
>
> '*Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character.* The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.'

Western scientists like Thomas Huxley, collaborator of Darwin, presented science as *the pursuit of truth and alleviation of human suffering.* Primitive man was ignorant, full of fear and suffering; modern man has knowledge; and knowledge destroys fear, as I said earlier. To discover the limited scope and range of modern scientific knowledge, we have only to ask one question: Has all the fantastic knowledge acquired by modern science made modern man totally fearless? Yes and no, is the answer. It has certainly lifted him above those fears that troubled the ignorant primitive man; but it has, unfortunately, also landed him in new and more serious fears and uncertainties. The one prominent affliction of man in our modern scientific civilization is *anxiety,* and all anxiety is a form of fear. And this affliction comes, not from external nature over which modern man has near total control, but from that mysterious inner nature of man about which he and his physical sciences know nothing; in fact, physical sciences have no relevance there, for it lies above his sensory level, at the *lokottara* or transcendental level. This affliction is most prominent in those societies which are highly developed in science and technology. The tragedy of modern Western civilization lies in the fact that the sciences of physical nature have advanced far, while the sciences of human nature have tarried far behind. And India is the one land where this latter science was pursued and developed with a single-minded devotion to truth and human welfare, which has no parallel elsewhere. And it is this contribution that made *Bharat* into an *amar bhārat,* eternal India, and that is proving not only a source of peace and fearlessness, but also of fascination, to the Western world, nay, to the whole world, in the modern age.

8. *The World's Expectations of India*

Accordingly, many Western thinkers today stress the immense importance of India's contribution to human welfare in the modern age. One such is the British historian, Late Arnold Toynbee, who has expressed this expectation and hope in a remarkable passage of his Foreword to the book by the late Swami Ghanananda of London Vedanta Centre on *Sri Ramakrishna: His Unique Message:*

> 'Sri Ramakrishna's message was unique in being expressed in action. The message itself was the perennial message of Hinduism. ... Today we are still living in this transitional chapter of the world's history; *but it is already becoming clear that a chapter, which had a Western beginning, will have to have an Indian ending, if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race. ... At this supremely dangerous moment of human history, the only way of salvation for mankind is an Indian way.* The Emperor Aśoka's and the Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence and Sri Ramakrishna's testimony to the harmony of religions; here we have the attitude and the spirit that can make it possible for the human race to grow together into a single family — and, in the atomic age, this is the only alternative to destroying ourselves.' (italics not by the author)

Our education has to take into account this international expectation from the world outside, as much as the expectations for a better life from our own people within our country; *these expectations can be fulfilled only when science in India becomes infused with humanist values*. Swami Vivekananda has asked our people to combine Vedānta with modern science. The confluence of the two energy streams of physical science and the science of spirituality will alone make for total human development in India. The greatness of India and its culture must be matched by the greatness of the people of India; that greatness does not come merely from high intellectual degrees and diplomas but from the high character of our men and women, and from the installing of every man, woman and child of our country on the pedestal of human freedom, dignity, and equality. This is nation-building through man-making, in the words of Swami Vivekananda. It is thus that we transform the *largest* democracy, that is our country today, into the *greatest* democracy that we hope it to be.

9. *Conclusion*

Romin Rolland presents Swami Vivekanda's personality in these arresting words (*Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, p.310):

> *In the two words, equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up.* He embraced all the paths of the spirit; the four yogas in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action *from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways that he taught had its own limits, but he himself had been through them all, and embraced them all.* As in a quadriga, he held the reins of all four ways of truth, and he travelled towards Unity along them all simultaneously. *He was the personification of the harmony of all human Energy.'* (Italics not by the author)

Here is an inspiring picture of India, of what India means to the world, given by Swami Vivekananda, with which I conclude my address (*Complete Works*, Vol.IV, p.314, 1962 Edition):

> ' I stand in awe before the unbroken procession of scores of shining centuries, with here and there a dim link in the chain, only to flare up with added brilliance in the next, and there she is walking with her own majestic steps — my motherland — to fulfil her glorious destiny, which no power on earth or in heaven can chek—*the regeneration of man the brute into man the God.*'

I convey my thanks and my love and best wishes to all of you.

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SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY *

1. *Introductory*

'Science can denature plutonium but science cannot denature evil in the heart of man', declares Einstein. With the ever-increasing rates of crime, juvenile delinquency, sex and drug explosions, varieties of neurotic and psychic distortions, and suicides, more especially in countries highly advanced scientifically and technologically, and slowly and steadily affecting the developing countries as well due to the high prestige of the West, science, or the pursuit of knowledge by man, is faced with the challenging problem of man—his growth, development, and fulfilment. 'We are in the middle of a race between human skill as to means and human folly as to ends', says Bertrand Russell in his book: *Impact of Science on Society* (pp. 120-121): and adds: 'Unless men increase in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow'.

2. *Pure Science: One of the Noblest Pursuits of Man*

The modern age is characterized as a scientific age. In pre-scientific ages, man dominated by ignorance, superstition, and fear. Knowledge destroys fear, is a famous dictum of modern science. And during the last four centuries, there has been a tremendous accumulation of precise, verified, and communicable knowledge through the modern scientific explorations of the external world by the various departments of the physical sciences. The driving force behind this unique modern achievement is the spirit of free critical inquiry characteristic of the modern physical sciences. This free critical spirit, and the scientific temper and the scientific method fostered by it, found expression as the pursuit of truth, in pure science, and the pursuit of its fruits, in applied science, with a view to, as Thomas Huxley expressed it in the last century, 'the alleviation of human suffering'.

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Contemporary psychic and social distortions in the highly developed countries, and the challenge of ecological disaster ahead, has created a reaction against science itself in these countries. While such a reaction may have some justification with regard to technology, or rather, over-technology, it will be a tragedy if it extends to pure science. *Pure science, with its passion for truth and human welfare, will always remain as one of the noblest pursuits of man.*

3. *Pure Science to Cover a Wider Ground than at Present*

But this pure science needs to cover a wider ground than the external physical world constituting only the external physical environment of human life. Science has to study the inner world of man as well, besides the outer world of physical nature. But, in the modern context, unfortunately, the sciences of physical nature have far out-stripped the sciences of man, leaving man puny and unstable, with his centre of gravity always outside of himself, and tending to be treated by science and by himself as a *thing*, an *object*. If the physical sciences have lifted man from many fears and uncertainties of his primitive past, it has landed him also in new fears and uncertainties arising from ignorance of his own inner nature. The modern man has to realize that such a study of the *'within'* of nature, as revealed in nature's evolutionary product that is man, is also a science, like the other study by the physical sciences of the *'without'* of nature. *Science so understood is not tied up with any particular body of facts.* As expounded by one of the great biologists, J. Arthur Thomson, in his book: *Introduction to Science* (Home University Library Edition, p. 58):

> 'Science is not wrapped up with any particular body of facts; it is characterized as an intellectual attitude. It is not tied down to any particular methods of inquiry. It is simply sincere critical thought, which admits conclusions only when these are based on evidence. We may get a good lesson in scientific methods from a businessman meeting some new practical problems, from a lawyer sifting evidence, or from a statesman framing a constructive bill.'

4. *Vedānta as the synthesis of the Sciences of the 'without' and the sciences of the 'within' of Nature*

Science as such is not, therefore, tied down to any particular order of facts, though the various departments of science, like physics or chemistry, botany or zoology, are tied down to particular orders of facts. These departments have limited scope, but science itself is unlimited in scope. And these various departments, starting from the study of separate fields tend, in their advanced stages, to over-step their particular boundaries and merge into one converging scientific search into the truth of the *without* of nature. This is science as unified knowledge of the *without* of nature. Similarly, the study of the data beyond the physical and sensory levels of experience, through the study of the diverse facts of the *within* of nature as revealed in man, constitutes the science of spirituality, according to Indian thought, as developed in the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* a few thousand years ago and continued to be re-authenticated up to our own times. This is also science as unified knowledge of the *within* of nature. And Vedānta, as philosophy, is the synthesis of the sciences of the *without* and the sciences of the *within* of nature in a comprehension of total reality. As declared by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* (XIII.2):

Kṣetra Kṣetrajnayoḥ jñānaṁ yat, tat jñānaṁ mataṁ mama—

'The knowledge of the *kṣetra* (the physical body and its environing physical world) and of the *kṣetrajña* (the knower of that *Kṣetra)* is true (and complete) knowledge, according to Me'.

5. *Conflict of physical Science with other Disciplines: a Purely Western Experience, not Indian*

This true and complete knowledge is what Bertrand Russell refers to as wisdom, in the passage quoted above, increase in which must accompany all increase in knowledge, according to him, if man is to be rescued from sorrow which is the fruit of mere knowledge.

Being an inner search, the science of spirituality is the science of meaning and value. Values do not drive from physical nature studied by the physical sciences and the machines fabricated by its technology; they derive from the depth of the human spirit. In the protesting words of Bertrand Russell (*Impact of Science on Society*, p. 77):

> 'The idolatry of the machine is an abomination. The Machine as an object of adoration is the modern form of Satan, and its worship is the modern diabolism. ...
>
> 'Whatever else may be mechanical, values are not, and this is something which no political philosopher must forget'.

If values are not mechanical and, consequently, do not derive from external physical nature, they must be spiritual and must be sought for in the depth of human nature itself. A philosophy of values is a part of, and derives from, a philosophy of man in all his heights and depths.

Western science could not develop a science of values, even in its so-called depth psychology of Freud and others, who found only sex, violence, and hunger for power in the depth of the human psyche they had unveiled, only because of the drag of the dogma of materialism on its scientific pursuits. *And the strong hold of this dogma on the Western scientific mind is mostly due to its hostile reaction to the dogmatic and intolerant Western religious tradition*—which is religion in its *ethnical* variety and not in its *scientific* or *spiritual* aspect—*which sought to stifle science and its free quest of truth, and which did the same as much with respect to its own religious denominations as to the other world religions.*

But that was exclusively an unfortunate Western experience, not universal. Throughout its long history, India, on the other hand, has fostered understanding and tolerance, both with respect to the physical sciences and with respect to intra-religious and inter-religious relations. India did not create and uphold the whole host of those conflicts which have plagued the West, namely, faith against reason, religion against religion, religion against science, mind against matter, and the natural against the supernatural. In his book *The Discovery of India,* Jawaharlal Nehru, who has done much to foster modern science and technology in India, has expressed the view that science, which has much leeway to make in India compared to Western countries, is bound to make increasing advances here in the modern period, because of the hospitality of the Indian national heritage to all science (pp. 626-27):

> 'Science has dominated the Western world and everyone there pays tribute to it, *and yet the West is still far from having developed the real temper of science. It has still to bring the spirit and the flesh into creative harmony.* In India, in many obvious ways, we have a greater distance to travel. And *yet there may be fewer major obstructions on our way, for the essential basis of Indian thought for ages past, though not in its later manifestations, fits in with the scientific temper and approach,* as well as with internationalism. It is based on a fearless search for truth, on the solidarity of man, even on the divinity of everything living, and on the free and co-operative develop-

ment of the individual and the species, ever to greater freedom and higher stages of human growth'. (Italics not by the author)

Again, in his lecture on *Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda,* Jawaharlal Nehru said (p.2):

> 'India never ignored, in the course of her long history, and in spite of the other activities of the world, the spiritual values of life; and she always laid certain stress on the search for truth and has always welcomed the searchers of truth by whatever names they may call themselves. And so India built up this tradition of the search for truth and reality, and, at the same time, she built up the tradition of the utmost tolerance to those who earnestly strive for the truth in their own way'.

Reality may be studied, but not exhausted, by the physical sciences, whose limitations proceed from their dependence entirely on sense-data, indicated by the limiting adjective *physical.* This limitation has been pointed out by several scientists themselves, including the mathematician astronomer Sir Arthur Eddington in his book *The Philosophy of Physical Science* (pp. 16-17):

> 'Let us suppose that an ichthyologist is exploring the life of the ocean. He casts a net into the water and brings up a fishy assortment. Surveying his catch, he proceeds, in the usual manner of a scientist, to systematize what it reveals. He arrives at two generalizations:
>
> 1. No sea-creature is less than two inches long;
> 2. All sea creatures have gills.
>
> 'These are both true of his catch, and he assumes tentatively that they will remain true however often he repeats it. His generalization is perfectly true of the class of creatures he is talking about—a selected class perhaps, but he would not be interested in making generalizations about any other class.'

Earlier, he had said in the preface to the above book (p. IX):

> 'I am not among those who think that, in the search for truth, all aspects of human experience are to be ignored, save those which are followed up in physical science. But I find no disharmony between a philosophy which embraces the wider significance of human experience and the specialized philosophy of physical science, even though the latter relates to a system of thought of recent growth whose stability is yet to be tested.'

When physical science or scientists forget or ignore this limitation implied in the adjective, *physical,* and pronounce judgements on human life or the nature of reality as a whole, it or they become dogmatic, and forsake truth-seeking. Similarly, Śaṅkarācārya has said, in his Upaniṣad commentaries, that the science of spirituality. which deals with reality above the sensory level, has no authority to pronounce judgements on what lie within the sphere of sense perception where the physical sciences rule supreme. Says he in his commentary on *The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (3.3.1 and 4.3.6.):

Na ca pramāṇāntara viṣaye śruteḥ prāmāṇyam kalpyate, Yathā sīṭo agniḥ kledayatīti. Sruteḥ tu tādarthye vākyasya pramāṇāntarasya ābhāsatvam; yathā khadyoto agniriti, talamalinam antarikṣam iti, bālānām yat pratyakṣam api, tat viṣaya-pramāṇāntarasya yathārthatve niścite, niścitārtham api bālapratyakṣam ābhāsi bhavati—

'Nor are the *Śrutis* (the Vedas) supposed to have authority in matters which are contradicted by other means of knowledge, as for instance, if they said, "Fire is cold and wets things". If, however, a passage (in the *Śrutis,* like *Tat tvam Asi*—'That thou art') is ascertained to have the meaning given by the *Śrutis,* then the evidence of the other means of knowledge must be held to be fallacious. For instance, the childish persons (the ignorant), think of fire-fly as fire, or of the sky as a blue surface; these are (sense) perceptions, no doubt, but when the evidence of the other means of knowledge regarding them has been definitely known to be true, the perceptions of the ignorant, although they are definite experiences, prove to be fallacious.'

Na ca pratyakṣam anumānena bādhituṁ śakyate. ... Na ca padārtha-svabhāvo nāsti. Na hi agneḥ uṣṇa-svābhāvyam anya nimittam, udakasya vā śaityam—

'Besides, direct sense perception cannot be nullified by inference. ... Nor must one deny the natural property of objects, for the natural heat of fire or the cold of water is not due to any other external cause'.

Says Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on *Religion and Science (The Complete Works,* Vol. VI, Sixth Edition, p. 81):

'Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience; they are called mystics; and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion.

'As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. ...

'Religion deals with the truths of the meta-physical world, just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science, because he reads the wrong book—the book within; and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion, because he, too, reads the wrong book—the book without.

6. *Scientists and the Dogma of Materialism*

One dogma that is stifling the spirit of modern physical science, and seriously distorting the human psyche and the social situation in this otherwise amazing modern space age, is *materialism* and its *reductionist* approach while dealing with inconvenient facts of human experience, against which distinguished scientists themselves have protested and warned. After terming *materialism* as an *intruder* earlier in his book, *Methods* and *Results* (Vol.I, p.161), Thomas Huxley, the collaborator of Darwin, repudiates materialism as a philosophy of life (*ibid,* pp. 164-65):

'If we find that the ascertainment of the order of nature is facilitated by using one terminology or one set of symbols, rather than another, it is our clear duty to use the former; and no harm can accrue, so long as we bear in mind that we are dealing merely with terms and symbols. ...

'But the man of science who, forgetting the limits of philosophical enquiry, slides from these formulae and symbols into what is commonly understood by materialism, seems to me to place himself on a level with the mathematician who should mistake the x's and y's with which he works his problems for real entities—and with this further disadvantage, as compared with the mathematician, that the blunders of the latter are of no practical consequence, *while the errors of systematic materialism may paralyse the energies and destroy the beauty of a life.'* (italics not by the author)

Nuclear scientist Werner Heisenberg considers materialism untenable in the light of nuclear physics. In a lecture in Washington, D.C., in April 1973, at a symposium sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences to observe the 500th anniversary of the birth of Copernicus, Werner Hesienberg said. (*American Review,* Summer 1974, p.55):

'What is really needed is a change in fundamental concepts. We will have to abandon the atomistic philosophy of Democritus and the concept of fundamental elementary particles. We should accept instead the concept of fundamental *symmetries,* which is a concept out of the philosophy of Plato. Just as Copernicus and Galileo, in their method, abandoned the descriptive science of Aristotle, and turned to the structural science of Plato, so we are probably forced in our concepts to abandon the atomic materialism of Democritus and to turn to the ideas of symmetry in the philosophy of Plato.'

7. *Matter as the Starting Hypothesis in Indian Scientific Inquiry*

India started her investigation into reality, in the Upaniṣads over four thousand years ago, with the inquiry into the most palpable aspect of reality, namely, *matter. The Taittīriya Upaniṣad,* in the opening verse of its third chapter, presents Varuṇa, the teacher, answering the question of his student and son, Bhṛgu, as to how to seek Brahman, the ultimate Reality, saying that he begin his search with *annam,* matter:

annam, prānam, cakṣuḥ, śrotram, mano, vācam iti—

'matter, energy, and the sense organs like sight, hearing, mind, speech',

and the Upaniṣad adds in the very next verse:

Annaṁ brahmeti vyajānāt—'(the student) understood (his teacher's hint) to mean that reality is matter'.

The investigation in that Upaniṣad reveals successively *prāṇa,* energy, and *manas; vijnāna,* and *ānanda*—the deeper and subtler psychic dimensions—as reality, finally landing the seeker on the truth of Brahman as infinite non-dual Consciousness, and the one Self in all, 'from Whom comes the universe, in Whom the universe rests, and unto Whom the universe returns at the end of the cosmic process'. The Upaniṣad, earlier, in the opening verse of the second chapter, had presented Brahman as *Satyam, Jnānam,* and *Anantaṁ*—'Truth, Pure Consciousness, and Infinity', and had said that 'Its realization, as embedded in the supreme Void in the cavity of one's own heart, leads man to life fulfilment': *yo veda nihitam guhāyām parame vyoman, so'snute sarvān kāmān saha brahmaṇā vipascteti.*

The Upaniṣads discovered deeper, subtler, and more immense ranges of energy in man, from the outer-most gross physical body to the innermost true Self of man.

Sankaracarya expresses this truth, in his commentary on the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (3.10 and 11) in a precise scientific sentence: Human energy resources are organized in an ascending scale of 'subtlety, *suksma,* immensity, *mahāntaśca,* and inwardness as Self, *pratyagatma bhutaşca*'. The first type of human energy is in the muscles—*sthula* or gross, and is limited in scope and outermost in range. The next type of energy lies in the nerves, more subtle, more immense, and more inward; if the nerve fibre behind the muscle is cut, the muscle, however big and powerful it may look, dies. The next type of energy lies in the mind, *buddhi,* more subtle, more immense, and more inward. It is this energy that helps man to develop his gross muscle energy into the more immense bull power and horse power, during his primitive state, and into the million-fold horsepower rockets, in the modern space age.

8. *Vedānta on the Spectrum of Energies in Man*

But this mental energy—though subtler, more immense, and more inward compared to his muscular and nerve energies, is not the highest and best that lies hidden in him. Like the quantum field-energy behind all momentary energy particles, and behind the more stable energy systems at and above the molecular levels, there is the infinite energy of God, of the nature of Pure Consciousness-Field, lying behind man and nature, say the Upanisads. Vedānta defines the 'without' of nature as the *parāk rūpa* of Reality, and the 'within' of nature as the *praytyak rūpa* of Reality; and it refers to the Ātman as *pratyagatman* or *pratyak caitanya.* A similar distinction is suggested by paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin, who calls energies in outer nature as *tangential* energies, and energies in man as *radial* energies, and recognizing a fundamental unity between the two. The verses of the *Katha Upaniṣad,* on which Sankaracarya comments as above, are a profound statement of the spectrum of energies within man, of the science of man in depth, of man as the Atman—the science of *Adhyātma-vidyā:*

Indriyebhyaḥ parā hyarthā
arthebhyaśca paraṁ manaḥ;
Manasastu parā buddhiḥ
buddheh ātmā mahān paraḥ.

Mahataḥ param avyaktam
avyaktāt puruṣaḥ paraḥ;
Puruṣāt na paraṁ kiñcit
sā kāṣṭhā sā parā gatiḥ—

'Superior to the sense organs are the nuclear dimensions of the sense objects; superior to the sense objects is *manas;* superior to *manas* is *buddhi;* superior to *buddhi* is *mahān ātmā* or *mahat,* i.e. the cosmic mind; superior to *mahat* is *avyakta,* (nature in its undifferentiated state); superior to the *avyakta* is the *Puruṣa* (the Self of all); that is the final end (of subtlety, immensity, and inwardness); that is the supreme goal.'

Śaṅkarācārya defines the word *parā,* higher or superior, in the above verse, as *sūkṣmā, mahāntaśca, pratyagātma-bhūtāśca*—subtle, immense, and of the nature of the inner self.

It is this inmost divine nature of man, and the immense energy resources hidden there, that the science and technique of spirituality, the science of *adhyātma-vidyā,* helps man to understand and to unfold, and thus achieve freedom, peace, and fulfilment. Modern science has given man intellectual energy and the command of immense physical energy resources; both these energies are, unfortunately, *digesting* him and making him alienated, frustrated, bored, anxious, tense, and cynical; not knowing how to control the horse of his mind, his horse-ride has turned into the tragedy of the horse enjoying the ride and he becoming a helpless victim of that ride! On the other hand, if the cerebral cortex disciplines and guides man's organic system and its energies—it was for this, says modern neurology, that nature evolved the cerebral cortex in man through the homeostasis she achieved in the later mammals—man will find, and take the road to, his spiritual freedom, through a second homeostasis he will have to achieve by himself within his psychic system, which Vedānta terms *sama* and *dama,* discipline of the mind and discipline of the sense organs. About the significance of physical homeostasis, Bristol neurologist Grey Walter says in his book: *The Living Brain* (p. 18):

> 'For mammals all, homeostasis meant survival, for man emancipation.'

Grey Walter considers homeostasis of modern neurology as the physiological equivalent of *yoga, nirvāṇa*, and other spiritual states. *The Kaṭha Upaniṣad* describes the glory of this second homeostasis of *yoga,* and the spirit of freedom it confers on man, in the last of the seven verses of its chariot imagery (3.9):

Vijñāna-sārathiryastu
manaḥ pragrahavān naraḥ;
So' dhwanaḥ pāram āpnoti
tat viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam—

'One who has *vijñāna*, enlightened reason, as the charioteer (of the chariot of his body-sense-organs complex), and whose mind, like the reins, is strong and tough, he or she reaches successfully the end of his life-journey in the supreme state of universality of divine illumination.'

9. *The Tragedy of Man: Stagnation at the Tangential Energy Level*

If the journey of man in the external world of the senses is guided and helped by the physical sciences, his journey inward, to explore the hinterland of the senses, the mind, and consciousness, and to realize the unity of the infinite and the immortal behind the diversities of the finite and the mortal, is helped and guided by the science of spirituality. *And India, unlike the West, sees no conflict between the two. It is one continuous journey to fulfilment, beginning obviously with the physical body and the senses and the environing world, and continuing beyond the sensory and the psychic to the spiritual.* It is like a child leaving off the toys and trinkets of childhood, naturally and spontaneously and without a tear, in the adolescent's and adult's search for knowledge and for the wider life. In all such growth, the child has to renounce its childhood attractions and fancies; it has to stir itself out of its stagnation at the tangential energy levels and express its life at its radial energy levels; and it accepts and welcomes this renunciation of the outer, *naturally and spontaneously,* with a view to, and with the hope of, achieving growth into wider realms of life and experience; *and if it does not strive for that growth by unfolding the higher possibilities hidden in it, it stagnates at its childish level.* Similarly, *modern man is stagnating at his organic level under the tyranny of the crudest materialism history has ever experienced,* helped by an efficient scientific technology that increasingly satisfies his never-ceasing organic cravings until, as expressed by the German poet Goethe in describing Faust's lamentation in his soliloquy in the woods (italics not by the author):

> Oh for the broken state of man!: I know
> Our unfulfilment now. Thou gavest bliss
> Which brings me near and nearer to the gods,
> And gavest too the dark companion whom
> I cannot rid me of; though, with his scorn,
> He breaks my pride and, in a single word,
> A breath, turns all Thy gifts and makes them nothing
> He lights a wild fire in my heart, a blaze,
> *Till from desire I stumble to possession,*
> *And in possession languish from desire.*

10. *Sri Ramakrishna on Bhoga and Roga versus Yoga*

There are three expressive words in Sanskrit which help us to understand and avoid the current pathology of the human situation: *Bhoga, yoga* and *roga*—organic satisfactions, spiritual growth and fulfilment, and physical and mental maladies, respectively. In the light of these terms and concepts, Sri Ramakrishna says that, from *bhoga,* man must rise to *yoga* to achieve life fulfilment; if he fails to do so, *bhoga* will land him in *roga.* As *bhoga* is a valid pursuit, *yoga* also is a valid pursuit. As nature has organically equipped man for *bhoga,* she has equipped him with the organic capacities for *yoga* also. If, however, he becomes stagnant at the *bhoga* level, and does not know, does not care, to continue his life's journey to unfold his higher possibilities at the moral, ethical, aesthetic, and spiritual levels, he will have to pay the price for that arrested development through *roga,* through various ailments, somatic as well as psychosomatic.

This is the tragic state of man in the otherwise amazing modern scientific civilization. A turning of human interests and seekings in the spiritual direction alone can save modern civilization; this alone will help modern man to handle and enjoy the world and its delights, as a free person, as a master, instead of remaining its helpless victim. This is the eternal message of the science of spirituality, which finds expression in the very opening verse of the *Iśā Upaniṣad,* the first of all the Upaniṣads: *Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā*—'enjoy (life and the world) through *tyāga*, renunciation.'

The aim of the science of spirituality is to lead man from wretchedness to blessedness, from creatureliness and helplessness to freedom and fearlessness.

We see the bitter fruits of the current crude materialism, ever increasing, not only in the psychic and somatic ailments, but also in the widespread corruption, bribery, and many other forms of social malpractices plaguing our own and other societies. *The strength to resist an immoral or anti-social temptation is a spiritual strength.* It does not come from mere physical or intellectual levels. The human intellect, even of highly intellectual persons, by itself, is helpless in the presence of temptations; *but if that intellect is lit up by the divine light of the Ātman behind, it develops the strength to stand up against all temptations, big or small.* This redemption of the intellect is also the redemption of man and his civilization; it is thus that knowledge matures into wisdom.

11. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa on the Synthesis of Science and Spirituality*

As there is no conflict between knowledge and wisdom, India sees no conflict between physical sciences and the science of spirituality. This is the great testament of Indian culture upheld during these five thousand years of its existence. This testament finds eloquent expression in the words, uttered over three thousand years ago, by the highly synthetic and comprehensive personality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in his teaching to his disciple Uddhava in the *Srīmad Bhāgavatam* (XI. VII. 19-21):

Prāyeṇa manujā loke
lokatattva-vicakṣaṇāḥ;
Samuddharanti hi ātmānam
ātmanaivā-śubhāśayāt—

'Generally speaking, in the world, human beings, who are efficient in the investigations into the truth of the external world of nature, uplift themselves by themselves from all that is dismal and primitive.'

Ātmano guruḥ ātmaiva
puruṣasya viśeṣataḥ;
Yat pratyakṣānumānābhyām
śreyo'sau anuvindate—

'In the case of a human being particularly, (unlike in the case of all sub-human species which depend entirely on physical nature), his or her *guru* or teacher is himself or herself; this is so because the human being achieves material and social welfare through (inquiring into the data of) direct sense experience and (inductive and deductive) inference based on the same.'

These two verses proclaim the importance of the pursuit of the physical sciences and technology, and the intellectual discipline these involve, for human growth and development. But are these alone enough for his welfare, and do these constitute the entire gamut of human possibilities? Yes, says modern Western science, which has no insight into the still deeper and higher possibilities hidden in man and what blessings flow from unfolding them. But Indian wisdom which, in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.4) had earlier classified all human knowledge into two categories, namely, *parā* i.e. higher, and *aparā,* i.e. ordinary, speaks through Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam,* in the next verse to be given later, that infinite and immortal Divine energy lies hidden within him, *and that nature has also given him the organic capacity to investigate and discover this highest dimension of all nature and man, by which alone will he shed his creatureliness and attain freedom and blessedness.*

He should continue his search for knowledge, and his march to freedom and fulfilment, from the physical sciences to the science of spirituality. In the modern period, this is the meaning and significance of young Narendra, a fine specimen of the rational and critical spirit and of the mastery of *aparā vidyā,* modern positivistic knowledge, going as a disciple to Sri Ramakrishna—who is the finest example of *parā vidyā,* who encourages that rational and critical spirit, and who did not himself pass through any *aparā vidyā* discipline—and coming out, as a beautiful blending of the two *vidyās,* as Swami Vivekananda. *The Indian vision of the unity and harmony of the parā and aparā vidyās, of physical science and spirituality, is re-authenticated in this close and intimate communion* *between Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.* Romain Rolland introduces both to his readers, in his *Life of Ramakrishna,* as the *splendid symphony of the Universal Soul;* and he describes Vivekananda's personality in his *Life of Vivekananda* in these glow ing words (p. 281):

> 'In the two words, equilibrium and synthesis, Vivekananda's constructive genius may be summed up. He embraced all the paths of the spirit: the four *Yogas* in their entirety, renunciation and service, art and science, religion and action, from the most spiritual to the most practical. Each of the ways that he taught had its own limits, but he himself had been through them all, and embraced them all. As in a quadriga, he held the reins of all four ways of truth, and he travelled towards unity along them all simultaneously. He was *the personification of the harmony of all human energy.* (italics not by the author).

Romain Rolland also describes the fruit of the *parā vidyā* in Sri Ramakrishna in a fascinating and thought-provoking passage in the introduction to his *Life of Ramakrishna:*

> 'The man whose image I here evoke was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people. Although he has been dead forty years, his soul animates modern India. He was no hero of action like Gandhi, no genius in art or thought like Goethe or Tagore. He was a little village Brahmin of Bengal, whose outer life was set in a limited frame without striking incident, outside the political and social activities of his time. *But his inner life embraced the whole multiplicity of men and gods.'* (italics not by the author)

So, in the third verse, verse 21, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, speaking as the Incarnation of the One Divine Self in all, says:

Puruṣatve ca māṁ dhīrāḥ
sāṇkhya-yoga-viśāradāḥ;
Avistarāṁ prapaśyanti
sarvā-śaktyupabṛṁhitam—

'In this very human personality also, the *dhīrās* (people endowed with intelligence and courage), who have mastered the science and technique of spirituality, also realize Me (God as the universal Self of all) as the infinite reservoir of all energies.'

With this impressive and inspiring thought-background and experience, scientists and intellectuals in India will be doing their historically conditioned service to humanity, in India and abroad, by living and disseminating this synoptic vision of the unity and harmony of *the physical sciences and the science of spirituality*. All *vidyās*, as much secular as sacred, are presided over, according to Indian tradition, by one and the same goddess, namely, *Sarasvatī*.

12. *Vedānta Comprehends Material Welfare and Spiritual Freedom*

That India did not neglect or look down upon material welfare is clear from the *Gītā* and from a sentence in Śaṅkarācārya's introduction to his *Gītā* commentary, in the past, and from a longer passage from Swami Vivekananda, today. Says Saṅkarācārya in that introduction:

Divividho hi vedokto dharmaḥ, pravṛtti-lakṣaṇo nivṛtti-lakṣaṇasca, jagataḥ sthiti-kāraṇaṁ, prāṇināṁ sākṣāt abhyudaya-niḥsreyasa hetuḥ—

'Two-fold, verily, is the *dharma*, philosophy of life, taught in the Vedas, of the nature of action in the external world and withdrawal in inward meditation, both of which are meant for the maintenance of the world (on even keel), and constituting, as they do, the supreme means for both worldly welfare and spiritual emancipation of all beings.'

In his *Reply to the Address at Ramnad*, Swami Vivekananda said (*Complete Works*, Vol.III, pp.148-50, Eighth Enlarged Edition):

'In this land are, still, religion and spirituality the fountains, which will have to overflow and flood the world, to bring in new life and new vitality to the Western and other nations, which are now almost borne down, half-killed, and degraded, by political ambitions and social scheming. From out of the many voices, consonant and dissentient, from out of the medley of sounds, filling the Indian atmosphere, rises up supreme, striking, and full, one note—and that is: *renunciation*. Give up. That is the watchword of the Indian religions. ... This continent is illumined with brave and gigantic minds and intelligences, which even think of this so-called infinite universe as only a mud-puddle; beyond, and still beyond, they go. Time, even infinite time, is to them but non-existence. ... And this going beyond the phenomenal is the very soul of religion.

'The characteristic of my nation is this transcendentalism, this struggle to go beyond, this daring to tear the veil off the face of nature and have, at any risk, at any price, a glimpse of the beyond. ... This spirituality, then, is what you have to teach the world.

'Have we to learn anything else, have we to learn anything from the world? We have, perhaps, to gain a little in material knowledge, in the power of organization, in the ability to handle powers, organizing powers, in bringing the best results out of the smallest of causes. This perhaps to a certain extent we may learn from the West.

'But if any one preaches in India the ideal of eating and drinking and making merry, if any one wants to apotheosize the material world into a God, that man is a liar, he has no place in this holy land, the Indian mind does not want to listen to him. Ay, in spite of the sparkle and glitter of Western civilization, in spite of all its polish and its marvellous manifestation of power, standing upon this platform, I tell them to their face that it is all vain. It is vanity of vanities. God alone lives. the soul alone lives. Spirituality alone lives. Hold on to that.

'Yet, perhaps, some sort of materialism, *toned down to our own requrements,* would be a blessing to many of our brothers, who are not yet ripe for the highest truths. ... There has been ample provision made for them in our Books; but, unfortunately, in later times, there has been a tendency to bind every one down by the same laws as those by which the *Sannyāsin* is bound, and that is a great mistake. But for that, a good deal of the poverty and the misery that you see in India need not have been. A poor man's life is hemmed in and bound down by tremendous spiritual and ethical laws for which he has no use. Hands off! Let the poor fellow enjoy himself a little, and then he will raise himself up, and renunciation will come to him of itself. Perhaps, in this line, we can be taught something by the Western people; but we must be very cautious in learning these things. I am sorry to say that most of the examples one meets nowadays of men who have imbibed the Western ideas are more or less failures. ...

'The secret of a true Hindu's character lies in the subordination of his knowledge of European sciences and learning, of his wealth, position, and name, to that one principal theme which is inborn in every Hindu child—the spirituality and purity of the race. ... But, mark you, if you give up that spirituality, leaving *it* aside to go after the materializing civilization of the West, the result will be that, in three generations, you will be an extinct race; because, the backbone of the nation will be broken, the foundation upon which the national edifice has been built will be undermined, and the result will be annihilation all round.

'Therefore, my friends, the way out is that, first and foremost, we must keep a firm hold on spirituality—that inestimable gift handed down to us by our ancient forefathers. ... Therefore, whether you believe in spirituality or not, for the sake of national life, you have to get a hold on spirituality and keep to it. Then stretch the other hand out and gain all you can from other races; but everything must be subordinated to that one ideal of life; and, out of that, a wonderful, glorious, future India will come—I am sure it is coming—a greater India than ever was. Sages will spring up greater than all the ancient sages.'

Again, speaking at the next stopping place after Ramnad, Paramakudi, he said (*ibid.*, pp. 157-61):

'Materialism has come to the rescue of India in a certain sense, by throwing open the doors of life to everyone, by destroying the exclusive privileges of caste, by opening up to discussion the inestimable treasures which were hidden away in the hands of a very few who have even lost the use of them. ...

'The West is groaning under the tyranny of the shylocks, and the East is groaning under the tyranny of the priests. Each must keep the other in check. ... What is the difference between the highest man and the lowest worm that crawls under your feet? Ignorance. That makes all the difference. For inside that little crawling worm is lodged infinite power, and knowledge, and purity, the infinite divinity of God Himself. It is unmanifested; it will have to be manifested.

'That is the one great truth India has to teach to the world, because it is nowhere else. This is spirituality, the science of the Soul. What makes a man stand up and work? Strength. Strength is goodness, weakness is sin. If there is one word that you find coming out like a bomb from the Upaniṣads, bursting like a bombshell upon masses of ignorance, it is the word *fearlessness*. And the only religion that ought to be taught is the religion of *fearlessness*. ... When we have known the nature of the soul, hope comes to the weakest, to the most miserable sinner. Only, declares your *Śāstra*, despair not. For you are the same whatever you do, and you cannot change your nature. Nature itself cannot destroy nature. Your nature is pure. It may be hidden for millions of aeons, but at last it will conquer and come out. Therefore, the *Advaita* (philosophy of non-duality) brings hope to every one and not despair. Its teaching is not through fear: it teaches, not of devils who are always on the watch to snatch you if you miss your footing—it has nothing to do with devils—but says that you have taken your fate in your own hands. ... Your spirituality, in a certain sense, will have to form the basis of the new order of society.'

And speaking a few days later at Kumbhakonam on *The Mission of the Vedānta*, he sent out this inspiring Vedāntic exhortation to people everywhere (*ibid.*, p. 193):

'Let us proclaim to every soul: *Uttiṣthata, Jāgrata, Prāpya varan nibodhata*—"Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached." Arise, Awake! Awake from this hypnotism of weakness. *None* is really weak; the soul is infinite, omnipotent. and omniscient. ... Teach yourselves, teach every one, his real nature. Call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything excellent will come, when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.'

13. *Modern Science: Its Steady Spiritual Orientation*

Many scientific writers have pointed out that, unlike in the last century, twentieth-century physics and biology have started taking note of the spiritual mystery that is in man. Nuclear physics does this in recognizing the importance of the *observer* in the interpretation of the observed data in all quantum phenomena, and in suggesting the term *participator* in place of *observer*. This brings out the importance of the inner world of consciousness as a significant datum for investigation; and such an investigation will take physical science to the spiritual dimension of reality, and also bring it closer to the science of spirituality developed by Vedānta and other philosophies. In neurology, similarly, the recognition of the significance of self-awareness and the ego, which nature developed in man, unlike the mere not-self awareness, which nature achieved in pre-human species, which became the focus of the higher powers like reason, will, and speech communication in man, and by which man dominates all nature, puts neurology on the high road of the investigation into the nature of the self, and brings it close to Yoga, Vedānta, and other systems of spirituality. All these, and the increasing infusion of Eastern spiritual truths and techniques into modern Western psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy, are a clear indication of the ever-growing healthy co-operation between physical science and the science of spirituality in this second half of this amazing space-age century. In the *preface* to his book bearing a significant title and published just two years ago by Schocken Books, New York: *The Meeting of the Ways: Explorations in East-West Psychology,* the Editor, John Welwood, says:

> 'The book is designed to offer new perspectives on such perennial questions as the nature of consciousness, personal identity, sanity, and psychotherapy. The first section asks fundamental questions about the nature of the human mind. The exploration of different levels of consciousness soon leads to questions about the nature of one's personal identity or ego, the subject-matter of the second section. In order to avoid purely speculative theories, the questions raised by the exploration of mind and self need to be grounded in a more empirical and disciplined approach. Thus the third section of the book deals with meditation, or how one might relate to these life questions in a direct personal way. Finally, the fourth section attempts to apply the insights of the first three sections to psychotherapy, and suggests new directions for therapy that may help people to live in a more wakeful way.'

And, further, in the *Introduction,* he says (pp. XV-XVI):

> 'The present encounter of the experiential, holistic, and enlightenment oriented traditions of the East, with the precision, clarity, skepticism, and independence of Western methods, could lead to a new kind of psychology that transcends cultural limitations and opens up what Abraham Maslow referred to as "the farther reaches of human nature." Such a new form of East-West psychology, as represented embryonically in the articles assembled here, is only in its infancy, but it does not

appear to be just a passing cultural fancy. May this book contribute to its further growth.

The closing para of the book proclaims the blessings that flow from joining the energies of the physical sciences to the energies of the science of spirituality (p. 226):

> 'If the Eastern teachings seem to speak so directly to Western culture at this time, perhaps it is because their grounding in paths of personal discipline and realization continues to provide simple yet powerful practices which train the individual to see directly into the workings of his or her own mind in a new way. *The radical shift in consciousness which seems to be required for a renewal of our culture cannot but be helped along by a more widespread involvement by psychologists and lay people in self-knowledge disciplines*. The great spiritual traditions of both East and West all agree that one becomes a fully open human being by realizing one's grounding in the universal principles of life. This transpersonal context, which one can realize directly, is finally what may provide complete self-knowledge, give strength and depth to one's life, and allow human beings to live in greater harmony with one another and with the natural environment. In so far as modern psychology has a stake in such tasks, it need to accommodate this larger vision.' (italics not by the author).

14. *Conclusion*

These passages, and similar other writings by eminent scientists, reveal the onset of the implementation, in the modern age, of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's synoptic vision of human knowledge, as expressed in the three verses from *The Srīmad Bhāgavatam* quoted earlier, of knowledge maturing into wisdom, through the integration of the two energy streams of the physical sciences and the science of spirituality. The confluence of these two energy streams in the coming decades alone holds the promise of our amazing modern scientific civilization progressing steadily in the direction of universal peace, well-being, and fulfilment—individual and collective.

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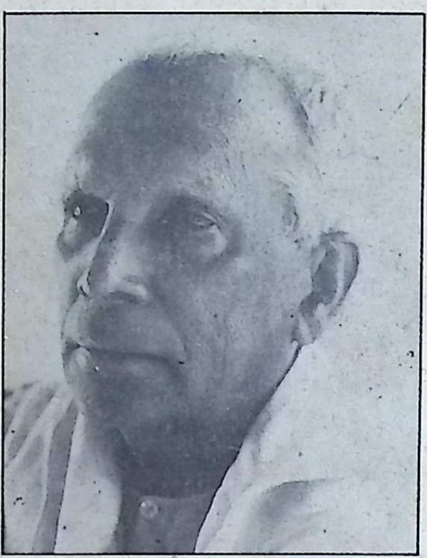

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